

3d Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

Issue 029 May 2008 \$4.50 / €3.25 / £2.25

Michael Kutsche

We Interview Award-Winning Conceptual Artist/Illustrator/3D Artist and Fine Artist, Michael Kutsche!



ARTICLES

Sketchbook Of Peter Chan



INTERVIEWS

Andreas Rocha, Nikolai Aleksander & Michael Kutsche



GALLERIES

Tobias Trebeljahr, Craig Sellars & Ron Crabb, plus more!



MAKING OF'S

'Did Somebody Just Say Ow?' by Nick Harris, plus more!



TUTORIALS

Matte Painting Series: Part 4 - Fire & Smoke, plus more!



EDITORIAL

Welcome, welcome, welcome to **ISSUE 029**. It's a pretty great issue this month to be fair! First up, let me mention our interview with the amazing Michael Kutsche, a traditional painter, conceptual artist, illustrator and 3D artist all in one. All of these talents go forth

to making the most wonderfully impressive portfolio that we have witnessed in a long time! You'll have seen his work around the great CG community sites; behind all those fantastic images is an intelligent, creative and down-to-earth artist who has "wowed" us with the interview you'll find on **PAGE 42**. In fact, I love this quote from Michael so much I'm going to repeat it: "Art is always a fight for freedom..." This really sums up my own experiences with "Art", and it's such a powerful statement that I think we should make it our thought for the month! *grins* In a nice contrast to Michael's interview, check out our interview with the beautiful Nikolai Aleksander, who dedicated some time to us this month for the interview that you'll find on **PAGE 9**. Nikolai seems to be going from strength to strength, both in terms of her artwork and her career as a freelance artist, and the work you'll find gracing her interview pages is sure to impress! We also had the great pleasure of chatting with popular matte painter, Andreas Rocha, this month. There's no need to "big up" this name as we are all familiar with this artist's talents and beautiful portfolio of images, so I will simply suggest that you check the interview out and get yourself all inspired up to paint yourself silly! We aim to please with our tutorials again with another instalment from the lovely Bente Schlick, who teaches us how to paint realistic hands, so head on over to **PAGE 88** if you've been having problems deciphering your digits and let Bente share some of her tips with you! We also welcome back one of my favourite artists around at the moment, Robin Olausson, who has created a fabulous speed painting for us. Flip to **PAGE 97** to see how he tackled this month's speed painting brief, and see how Mike Corriero answered the same brief but with extremely different approaches and results (we love it when that happens!). If you're following our tutorial series we're on Part 4 of Matte Painting with Tiberius Viris and Part 3 of Mike Corriero's beautifully insightful Creature Concept Design. This month Tiberius blows up our stunning castle and Mike morphs different animals' characteristics to create some intriguing results! Finally, in this month's Making Ofs, Louis-Philippe Lebel, Nick Harris and Jeff Haynie all show us the thoughts and working processes behind their great artwork. So enjoy plenty! Ed.

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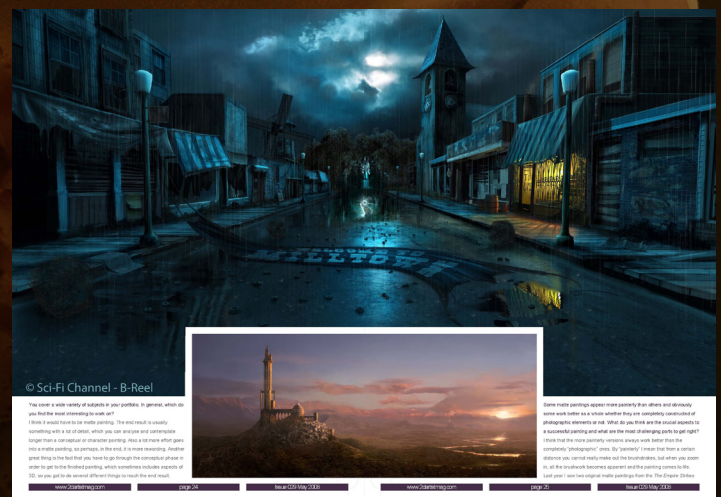
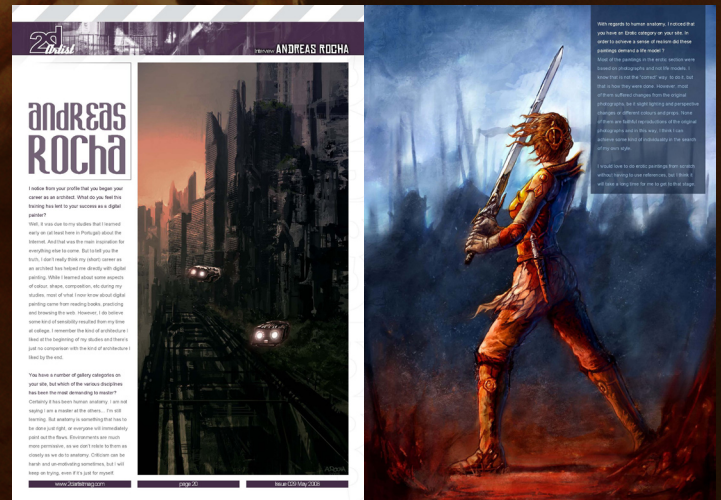
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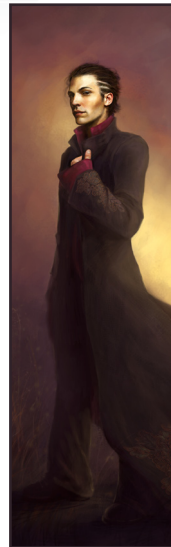
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CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Every month, many creatives and artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist Magazine. Here you can read all about them! If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com



Nikolai Aleksander

Born in 1978, Nikolai spent the first 17 years of her life in Germany, then moved to England to study A-Level

Theatre and Music. She returned to Germany for a short while after, working on film as a set assistant, and in 1999 moved to the UK for good. In 2000, Nikolai started drawing. With the discovery of a Wacom tablet in 2002, her work suddenly took off on a path she hadn't quite expected...

<http://www.admemento.com> x@admemento.com

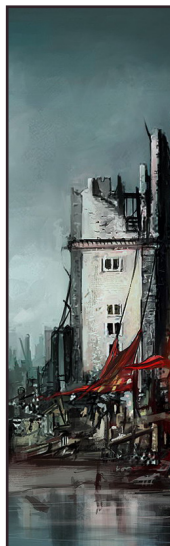


Andreas Rocha

is a 2D Freelance Artist from Lisbon/Portugal, specialising in environments, be it matte painting or conceptual artwork.

He studied Architecture in college, but soon found that his true love was for digital painting. His work includes concepts for games, album/book covers, matte paintings for advertising and editorial illustration, amongst others.

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rocha.andreas@gmail.com



Michael Kutsche

is an award-winning Conceptual Artist/Illustrator/3D Artist and Fine Artist located in Berlin, Germany, who has worked

for the film and games industry since 1998. His experiences reach from art directing and animating commercials and music videos to lead design for (yet not finished) film projects. Between the paid jobs he keeps track of his own ambitious projects as a fine artist, always remaining true to his path as an autodidact.

<http://www.misttermk.de/>

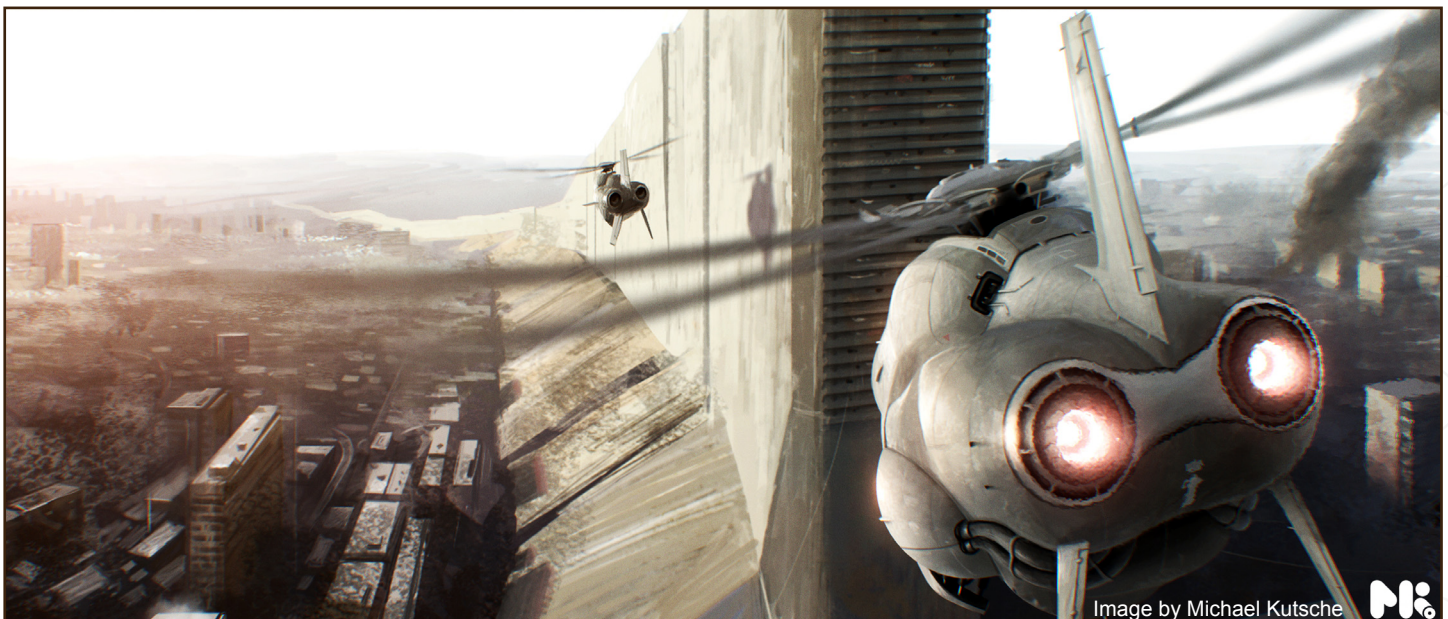

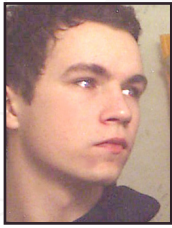


Image by Michael Kutsche 

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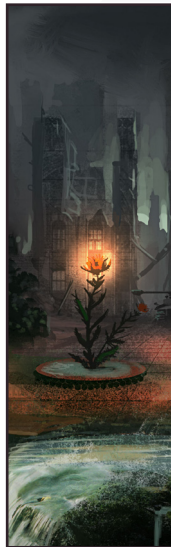
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Robin Olausson

is a 22 year old freelance concept artist/illustrator from the South of Sweden. He's a highly motivated, self-educated person who always love new challenges. In the future he hopes to get work in the games industry, publish his own comics, and become one of the top designers and illustrators!

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Bente Schlick

is a German freelancer and art student from Germany. She is an illustrator for books who would also like to work as a concept artist for games and movies in the future. Her main inspiration comes from legends, myths and poems.

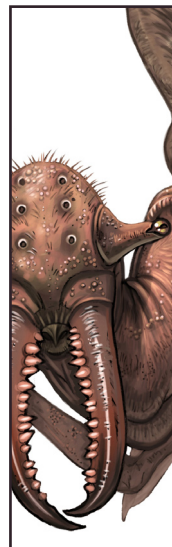


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Tiberius Viris

is currently working as a Freelance Matte Painter/CG Artist for both the feature film and games industries, and also as an Environment Illustrator for various projects and clients. His work has also been featured in several prestigious books, such as Expose 5 and D'Artiste Matte Painting 2.



Mike Corriero

Currently, Mike produces assets as a Freelance artist for various companies including everything from creatures, environments, structures, illustrations and icons. Some of his clients include Radical Entertainment, ImagineFX and Liquid Development to which he has contributed work for projects delivered to Flagship Studios and Ensemble Studios through the art direction and outsourcing of LD

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Peter Chan

was born in Hong Kong and raised in Toronto, Canada. He began inventing creative images at a very young age and will continue to create new and provoking imagery with his art work. His current works are based on themes of fairytales, folklores, myths and children's stories. He is also a recent graduate from Sheridan College's BAA Illustration Program in Canada.



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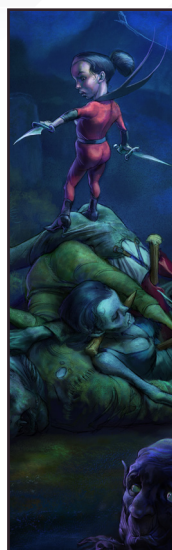
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Louis-Philippe Lebel

was born in Canada, Ottawa, in 1982, but was raised in the province of Québec. Drawing and Art in general has always been of great interest to him, from his childhood till now. He now has two years' experience in the Video Games Industry, which he has gained from his current employment at Beenox Activision, in Quebec City, as a Lead Texture Artist.

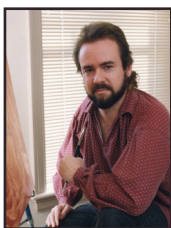
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Nick Harris

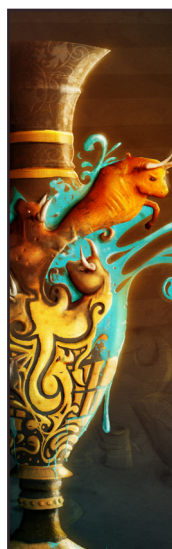
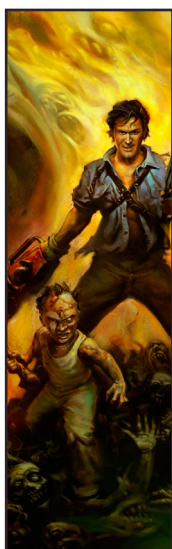
has worked as a children's book illustrator full-time freelance, since 1982. He started making the transition to digital around the year 2000 after working mostly in ink and watercolour before that. He's best known for the book Dragon Quest (Usborne), done in conjunction with the talented writer Andy Dixon, and for recent work a couple of titles in the Templar 'Ology' series.

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vigil.pomfret@online.fr



Jeff Haynie

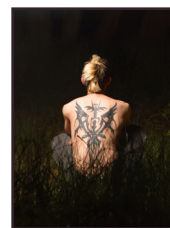
has worked as an Art Director and Concept Artist for companies like DreamWorks Interactive, EA Games and THQ on games such as Medal of Honor, Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2, Clive Barker's Undying and Evil Dead Regeneration. As an illustrator his client list includes Disney, Pixar, Warner Brothers, American Airlines, Texas Instruments, Pepsi-cola, and Frito-lay. Jeff is currently an Art Director at Big Fish Games. <http://www.jeffhaynie.com>
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Jason Bowman

is an Australian artist that fills the day as a full-time Senior Artist crafting post production goodies, and the nights with his own distinctive creative feats. From graffiti to tattoos to concepts to design to photography to coding, there are few creative tasks he doesn't bury himself in!

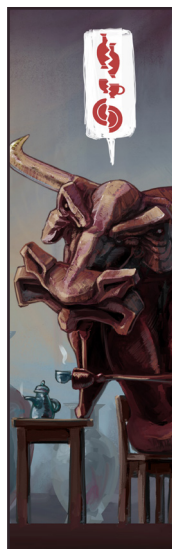
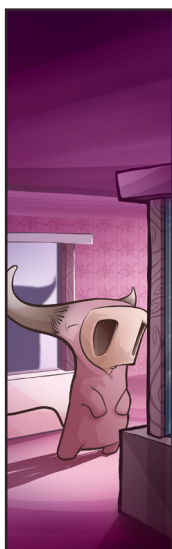
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David Neale

Started using Photoshop whilst doing his Illustration degree in Hull, UK, & has taught himself from there onwards. After graduating in 2005, he has worked as a freelance consultant for EA games, sold prints in galleries, & has completed various freelance projects in the illustration field. Now represented by Advocate Illustration Agency, he hopes to get more work on children's books & would also like to move into concept design for animation at some point in future.

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János Kiss

Designs identities, brochures, flyers & so on, & sometimes also illustrations, for a small company in Budapest, Hungary. Apart from graphic design, he works to improve his digital painting - it is a pleasure for him. He usually works with Painter & ArtRage. Nowadays, his main goal is to develop his portfolio - demonstrating several styles & techniques.

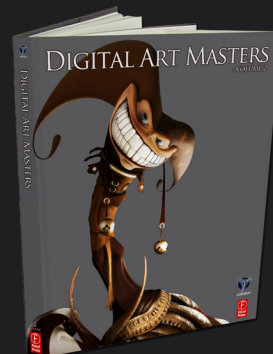
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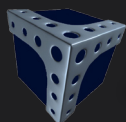
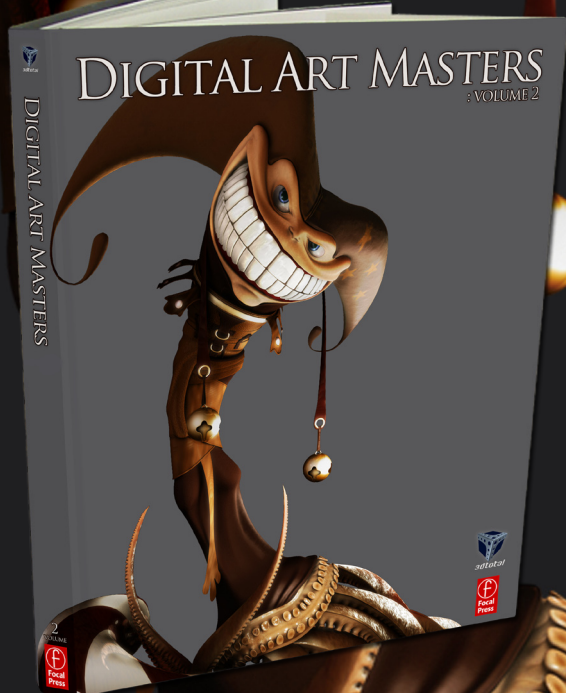
FEATURES 58 OF THE FINEST DIGITAL
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THE INDUSTRY TODAY, FROM THE
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"MY INSPIRATION LIES MOSTLY WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND STORIES. BOOKS. THOUGHTS AND MOODS. MUSIC INSPIRES ME GREATLY. MOSTLY CLASSICAL AND SOUNDTRACKS. AS BOTH ARE MORE OPEN TO INTERPRETATION THANKS TO LACKING LYRICS. WITHOUT MUSIC, I DON'T THINK I WOULD BE PAINTING AT ALL."



After chatting with Nykolai for a few weeks now, I realised it was just too selfish of me to keep this fantastic artist all to myself. I thought it was about time we published an interview with her to learn about all the little things that make her 'tick', and how those things go into making her artwork so truly wonderful! So here we go...

Nykolai
Aleksander

Nykolai Aleksander

Hi Nykolai - thanks for this interview. As I mentioned, I've been chatting to you for a while now about your work and your influences and such, so could you just introduce yourself for those readers who are not yet familiar with you or your work?

My pleasure! Okay, what can I say? I could ramble on about where I was born, my childhood, or how I got into art (pens and a piece of paper are generally a good start...), but I don't really fancy condensing three decades of my life into a couple of paragraphs, to tell you the truth. Besides, it doesn't really define who I am or what I do.

Originally from Germany, I am now living in the UK – Scarborough to be precise, after a 7-year-stint in London. I share my house with several pets, am a coffeeholic, smoke too much, and love pasta and wine gums (not together, mind you). The name Nykolai Aleksander is a pseudonym that I've been using since I started showing my work online, and I've grown used to being mistaken for either being Russian, or a bloke, or both. I don't like disclosing my real name, but if I did, people no doubt would start asking if I am related to the creator of The Simpsons, as I happen to share his last name. Just my luck! [Laughs].

Painting was a hobby for me until a couple of years ago; first when the fine art gallery Washington Green asked me to come on board with my oil paintings (an offer that subsequently disintegrated for various reasons), and then when Paul Hellard from Ballistic Publishing asked me to submit three of my works for the



book Exotique 2. Magazine and more book exposure followed, and now painting is a full-time job, albeit one I never actively sought. I wouldn't want it to be any different, though. I'd feel rather lost without it.

My inspiration lies mostly with personal experiences and stories, books, thoughts and moods. Music inspires me greatly, mostly classical and soundtracks, as both are more open to interpretation thanks to the lack of lyrics. Without music, I don't think I would be painting at all.

So where were you showing your artwork for the likes of Washington Green and Ballistic Publishing to see it and contact you? Was it one of the well-known art community sites? I think many artists reading this would be thrilled to be contacted by Ballistic, so how did Paul Hellard find you...?

I had my work on my website at the time, as well as on deviantART. A representative of Washington Green found me on deviantART. Where Paul Hellard saw my work I don't know, as he never mentioned it in his initial email, or at least as far as I remember. He just told me he had seen my work and would like me to submit three pieces that he named. To be honest, I was quite taken aback to be contacted by him, as I'd never considered being good enough to even submit to any of the Ballistic books. Maybe I was wrong?!



I actually first heard about you through Justin Lassen, who emailed me to tell me about this fantastic artist who was painting a piece for him. Now, for those who know Justin they'll know about his Synaesthesia projects. You once explained the term "synaesthesia" to me so beautifully, so could you also tell our readers about this condition and how it plays a part in your own artwork?

Well, Synaesthesia is a medical condition where two senses are linked. The most common form seems to be the one where people see different words or numbers in different colours, even though it's not two senses. Others see colours when they hear music. I am not sure if this also works the other way round, but that is essentially what Justin is referring to in his project: hearing music when you see colours and shapes...

I don't really have Synaesthesia, but for me, music makes colours in my mind turn into scenes; different types of music bring different colour schemes. Scenes change and pictures start to form, usually in motion, like my own personal video clip. It's like a sort of MTV on acid without the danger of an overdose, though I must admit at times my mind gets rather frizzled out. I usually listen to the same music over and over while working on a piece, or else what I see in my mind loses itself in something completely different.

I love the whole concept of seeing images form from music – amazing! I trained as an artist myself and yet I have never been able to see pictures form from music in my mind, quite as you have described in this way, and so I find this a truly amazing "gift" to have been blessed with! Can you briefly try and talk us through the motions you go through when painting an image from an inspirational piece of music?

I can try, though I won't take any responsibility if it comes out as one garbled account of seemingly total insanity... Usually it starts with one piece of music that captures me for whatever reason – mainly film soundtracks. I



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instantly see things in my mind whenever I listen to music, but some pieces are better than others to do that to me. It's an emotional response, really, and in the case of soundtracks has nothing to do with the film they're from. Different sounds give me different colours, and then images. I'm pretty sure everyone knows what it's like to hear a certain type of music and then associate it with a place, and the colours and general appearance of that place, or its people. That would be the initial stage, and I work from there. Most of the time I see figures occupying that space the music creates, and they take on more form the longer I listen to the same track or set of tracks. It's like a journey through sound. At some point I start to single out which

figure I may want to paint, let them roam about a bit longer in my head, then freeze-frame them, in a way. Then I start with the sketch, choose the colours the music dictates, and take it from there.

"The Samurai Templar" is linked with the soundtrack of *The Last Samurai*; "The Walker" with that of *Kingdom of Heaven*; "Lucifer" with *The Passion of the Christ* (I know, I know...), specifically the track *Resurrection*... you get the idea.

Then again, maybe I'm presuming that everyone understands this, because to me it's an everyday thing? Music has been a part of me



ever since I can remember; I've been playing the piano for some 23 years now, and studied music during my A-Levels. I was dancing ballet from the age of four, and later did gymnastics, which also is partly accompanied by music. I guess all that influenced and shaped my mind to all this.

Okay, so looking at your portfolio (<http://nykolai.deviantart.com>), your work is primarily character based; realistic painterly characters, alone in their painted backgrounds. What is it about people/characters that inspires you so greatly, and why is it that you tend to paint them as single characters with limited props, rather than in scenes?

To me, there is nothing more beautiful than the human face, and the expression of eyes. The face of a person is like a canvas, and their eyes spill their stories onto it. Everything else is secondary. You don't need to dress them in extravagant clothes and set them into a palace to show their power or greed or vanity; you don't need to make their surroundings pink and fluffy or very dark to show love and compassion or heartbreak and evil. Unnecessary props and surroundings just take the viewer's focus away from what really counts – in my eyes. Of course, elaborate character scenes with lots of props are beautiful (or horrifying) to look at, but I often get lost in them in a way I don't like to get lost in images, just like many artists seem to get lost in painting them. To me, they often lack

something - something that draws me in other than the myriad of things to see. When your intention is to show a place, or different world, rather than characters and their inner workings, that's a different story. However, that is not my world.

You have a very poetic and beautiful way of describing things which also shows through in your work. You are obviously a very emotional and thoughtful person! This makes me wonder: if you were to paint a portrait of yourself, right here and now – today, then what would you show in the eyes of the portrait and what kind of mood would be portrayed in the piece? Oooh, dangerous question - [laughs] - I'm not used to stripping off in public! Cold distance would be the general mood. I kind of feel very detached from things around me at the moment. The eyes would have a mischievous glimmer, and be very alert; cautious, but not unwelcoming, with a hint that there is far more to discover behind them than is visible at first sight, if only you dared come closer...

You once mentioned to me that you paint every image at an amazingly high resolution to enable them print-ready at the largest possible size. Can you just tell us a little about the advantages of painting at such a high resolution? Does it ever have its downsides?

Yes – 300dpi and usually anything above 12.000 pixels. I'm not sure there is an advantage other than extremely large prints; maybe that you can be a bit lazy on the details and general refinement, yet it still looks very detailed and precise when printed or shown online. Nothing ever gets printed at its original size; usually the print size is 24% of the original size when working at 300dpi. Of course, you can also go into insane detail, almost painting pixel by pixel, and thus get a picture that is almost better than photo quality. I have done both.

The downside is, if you don't have a dedicated computer, you can forget it! Photoshop starts



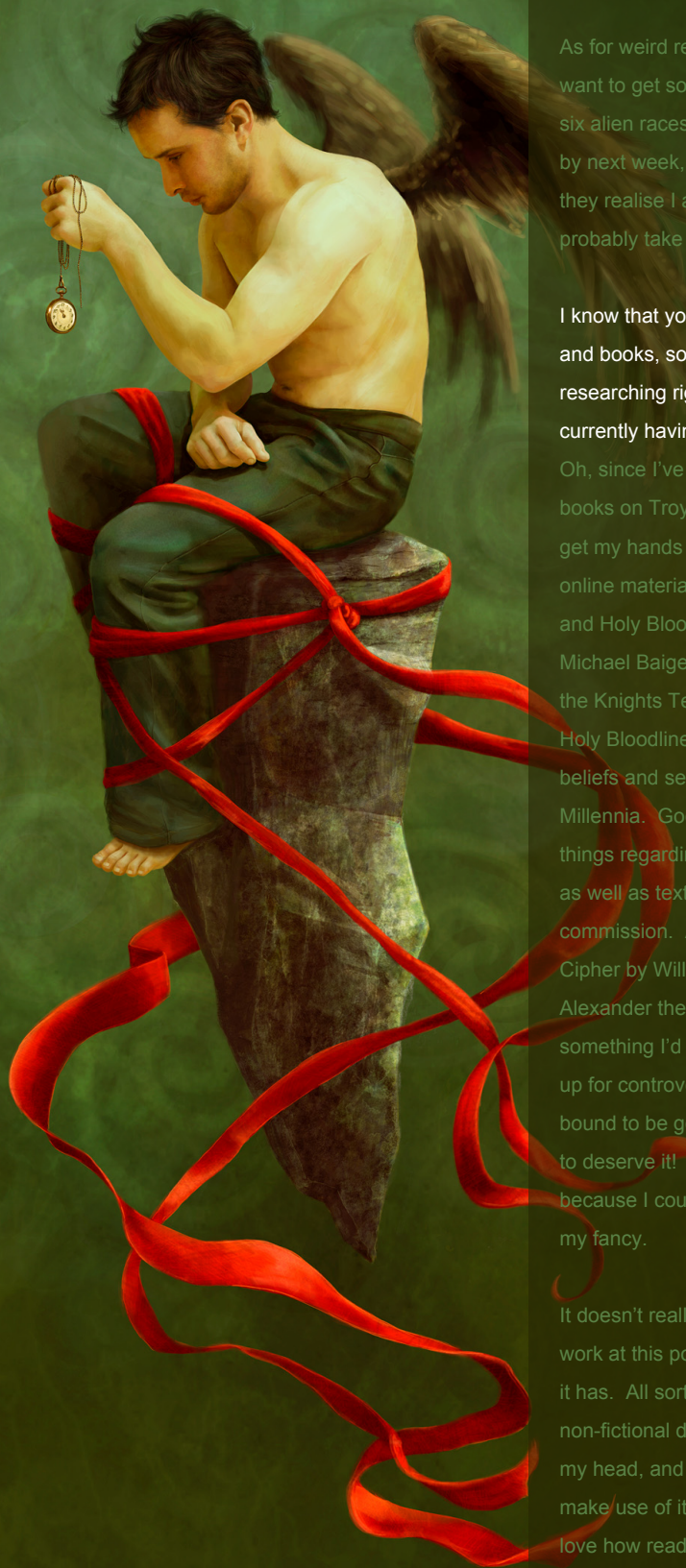
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to lag, certain commands cannot be executed due to too little memory, and so on. My current machine has been very good to me over the past two and a half years, but I also have to be very good in return: I tend to move not needed files to my external hard drive, to give Photoshop as much memory as possible to work with. I have a divided hard drive, which helps. Photoshop is installed on the C drive, while its primary scratch disks use the much bigger D drive. So far, there have been no downsides for me but I still want a faster machine. One day...

I know we were absolutely amazed when we received one of your super high-res images recently; we zoomed right into 100% and

the quality was just so pure and wonderful – not a pixilation in sight! What are your main commissions for clients right now, and what are you currently working on? Do you ever get any weird requests from potential clients?

These days, I mostly get asked for character portraits or character concepts based on stories or for games. My most amazing client at the moment is Jesse K. Hill, who's commissioned me to do a dozen (or possibly more) paintings based on this world he has created – both as a book and game, I believe: characters, with hints of scenery around them to give a clue about their immediate environment. He's giving me so much artistic freedom with all the paintings, it's just great. Of course, they are based quite



solidly on his ideas, but he's never once stopped me chopping and changing things around, or adding to them, actually asking for my input. Those images are what I'm working on at the moment for the most part, mostly with a couple of weeks break between each one.

As for weird requests, I get the 'oddbots' who want to get some "quick character concepts for six alien races and five worlds" done, preferably by next week, and then run a mile when they realise I actually want money! Mind, I'd probably take my price in M&S vouchers, too...

I know that you are inspired greatly by history and books, so what are you reading and researching right now, and what impact is this currently having on your art practice?

Oh, since I've exhausted all the worthwhile books on Troy and Ancient Greece that I can get my hands on for the moment, including online material, I've just finished Holy Grail and Holy Blood and The Jesus Papers by Michael Baigent. They are foremostly about the Knights Templar, the Priory of Sion, the Holy Bloodline/Grail, and the history of religious beliefs and secret societies over the past two Millennia. Good old hypotheses on various things regarding the life of Jesus, the Gospels, as well as texts that were denied by the Bible commission. And the novel The Alexander Cipher by Will Adams, about the lost tomb of Alexander the Great. The first two were just something I'd felt like reading, as I am always up for controversial knowledge – I'm already bound to be going to Hell, so I may as well work to deserve it! The other one was for fun, and because I couldn't find anything else that struck my fancy.

It doesn't really have any direct influence on my work at this point, but I guess subconsciously it has. All sorts of pieces of either fictional or non-fictional data get stored somewhere in my head, and at some point or another I will make/use of it – either directly or indirectly. I love how reading allows me to visualise things; something films take away from you. Don't get me wrong, I love watching films and get inspired by them, but I never feel really comfortable with painting something based on an idea I had while watching a film.

I was lucky to be allowed to read the lengthy introduction to a story by Jesse K. Hill that I'm currently commissioned to visualise. I prefer that to just working to briefs. It really helped me not just to understand the characters a bit better, but also to get a feel for the world they live in. The same goes for the characters in *Convivium* by Andrew E. Maugham, but that really goes without saying, as that book is in my blood, as are its protagonists. It also is the book that started what I now call my painting career while I was co-working on it with the author from 2001 until its publication in 2005.

So your main influences are music and books – how very cultured! I remember you once told me that you tend not to get inspiration from other artists and that you prefer to source your own inspiration, i.e. through history books or music and the like. Having said that, are there any artists that you've ever aspired to be like or who's work send tingles down your spine – be it one of the Masters or a contemporary? Ooh, did I just detect a hint of sarcasm in there? [Laughs]. Hmm, I think I would have to say Craig Mullins. He's the definitive Godfather of Digital Painting, a modern DaVinci. I know I would never be able to paint like him, but his work is just brilliant to look at. Most of his sketches and concepts show a very raw ability to convey reality, or heightened reality. And most of the time they aren't even refined, yet show so much detail and an eye for light and colours that it's simply mind-blowing.

I also rather like the old Masters, though some of them I found to be more impressive in print than in reality, maybe because of the digital enhancement that goes into many prints these days. I was always awestruck by the Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel, until I finally saw them. Sure, they still looked good, but to me lost much of their magic crammed into the small space of the chapel, and the lighting wasn't exactly perfect either. The art in St. Peter's Basilica on the other hand just overwhelmed me; intensely beautiful stuff. All



© Otherworld

of it! Museums don't do it for me, too sterile; it's like the art is removed from its original context and with it loses its soul.

Am I right in that you use yourself as a reference for some of your paintings? If so, is the reason for this because you are the easiest reference source? Or do you simply like to reference personal stories and experiences in your artwork?

Yes. Mainly because I don't really have access to any models, and none of my friends are too keen on modelling for me. I usually just reference my body for the pose, rather than my face, and I tend to change it to suit the character I am painting. I'm very thin, and I find it easier to add to a thin frame than to take off a big one.

When I don't paint particular characters – and I've been doing nothing but that for some time now – but want to do something more personal, I like using myself and wouldn't really want to get a model. Personal feelings, thoughts and moods are just something that I wouldn't want to project on another person. It wouldn't feel right.

When you use yourself as a point of reference, does this involve photography or do you tend to work more from life – be it in reverse – using a mirror? I can see from your website that you're also into photography. How do you find photography helps you in your painted artworks, or do you keep the two very separate?

When I reference, it's almost always from photography. I have a good sense for how



things should be even without any references whatsoever, but I'm a hopeless perfectionist. Sometimes I reference a face, other times a body or body part, and again other times everything. It really depends. Hands and feet though I always have to reference, because somehow I've not yet quite caught on to painting them correctly without help, or at least not from all sorts of angles.

Photography in general helps me observe things – lighting, shadows, angles, anatomy. Of course, I can sit down in the street and watch people and scenes, but they don't stay with me long enough to observe closely, or as closely as I would like it sometimes. Also, I found that I can express myself differently through photography than I ever could through painting, and of course vice versa.

As well as your character work, you also have some really cute cartoon pieces in your portfolio. These seem to act as a nice balance against your more serious character-based paintings. When do you decide or think that the time is right to switch from your painterly style to a cartoon? Or are you simply always doodling in your sketchbook?

I never think, "Righty, now I should do some cute or funny stuff". It just happens, and anything can trigger it: a situation, a comment, a mood, or simply boredom. I don't have a sketchbook as such; most of my sketchbooks are full of writing and one or the other doodles, but nothing that I ever take further. Those sketchbooks and their writings rather influence my more serious paintings.

I'm just curious, but how many hours a day do you spend writing and doodling? Do you find that you concentrate on one work at a time, or can you work on a variety of pieces all at once and not get trapped by one or the other?

I'd say I spend a good 10-12 hours painting every day. It's easier in winter, due to short days and all, and I find it easier to work on digital paintings without daylight glaring around me. I tend to just work on one painting at a time, unless I do some traditional work as well, in which case I switch between the two – day and night shifts, so to speak. The same goes for when I make jewellery. I find it relaxing to

do something on the side; it takes my mind off everything else around me, but at the same time makes me focus on what I really have to do.

As for my writing, I only really do that in bursts – sometimes small bursts, sometimes really big ones, where I just keep ranting on and on for weeks on end. Something springs to mind, and I have to write it down lest I forget and then get angry with myself for forgetting. I usually get the best sentences into my head just before I drift off to sleep, which is kind of annoying. And even if I then cannot remember them the

next morning, a remnant of them stays with me and usually gets worked into one or the other painting.

What has been your most accomplished artwork to date, and for what reasons?

Oh dear...I don't know. Some might say "The Sentinel", and I think I have to agree, because it was chosen as the cover of Exposé 5 (Ballistic Publishing) and subsequently graced posters and plastic bags at Siggraph 2007, and received a Choice Award on CGTalk. I'm still haunted by it on many CG websites, wherever the book

is advertised. It's nice, but no one really knows who painted it unless they buy the book or happen to stumble upon my portfolio! [Laughs]. It took me a hell of a long time to paint, and personally I think it is one of my most profound paintings, with a bitter aftertaste of reality regarding the subject matter and meaning of the picture.

Other than that, I think it would have to be "Lucifer", because damnit! It took me almost 6 years to get that from mind to canvas, with many more or less failed attempts in the process! It'll be in Digital Art Masters: Volume 3, and received an award on the IT'S ART magazine website. It got people to pick up Convivium, and those who'd already read it thought it was spot on.

Wow, yes I remember reading that it took you a long time to get Lucifer finished. Are there any other pieces that you have in your portfolio right now that you think you'll go back to in the future and recreate them into future masterpieces? Just "Lucifer", "Nuri" and "Gabriel", I think. All three need more paintings (and the other characters still need to be painted, too!) Far too many ideas there! There's too much material in the book alone to convey it all in one or two paintings. It's a kind of addiction I guess. Other than that, I promised Jesse to paint the Samurai Templar again. Not because he didn't like the first one, or because he's grown tired of it, but because the image only shows one side of their make-up, the "Templar at Rest". He would love to see a "Templar in Motion", and quite frankly, so do I. At least that gives me a good excuse to play with my Katanas again!

Finally, at the beginning of this interview you mentioned that you'd never intended to become a full-time painter... so I'm just wondering what you think you would have become should you not have (God forbid!) found your career as an artist?

Probably a bum in the street begging for M&S vouchers...



NYKOLAI ALEKSANDER

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.admemento.com>

Or contact them at:

x@admemento.com

Interviewed by: Lynette Clee

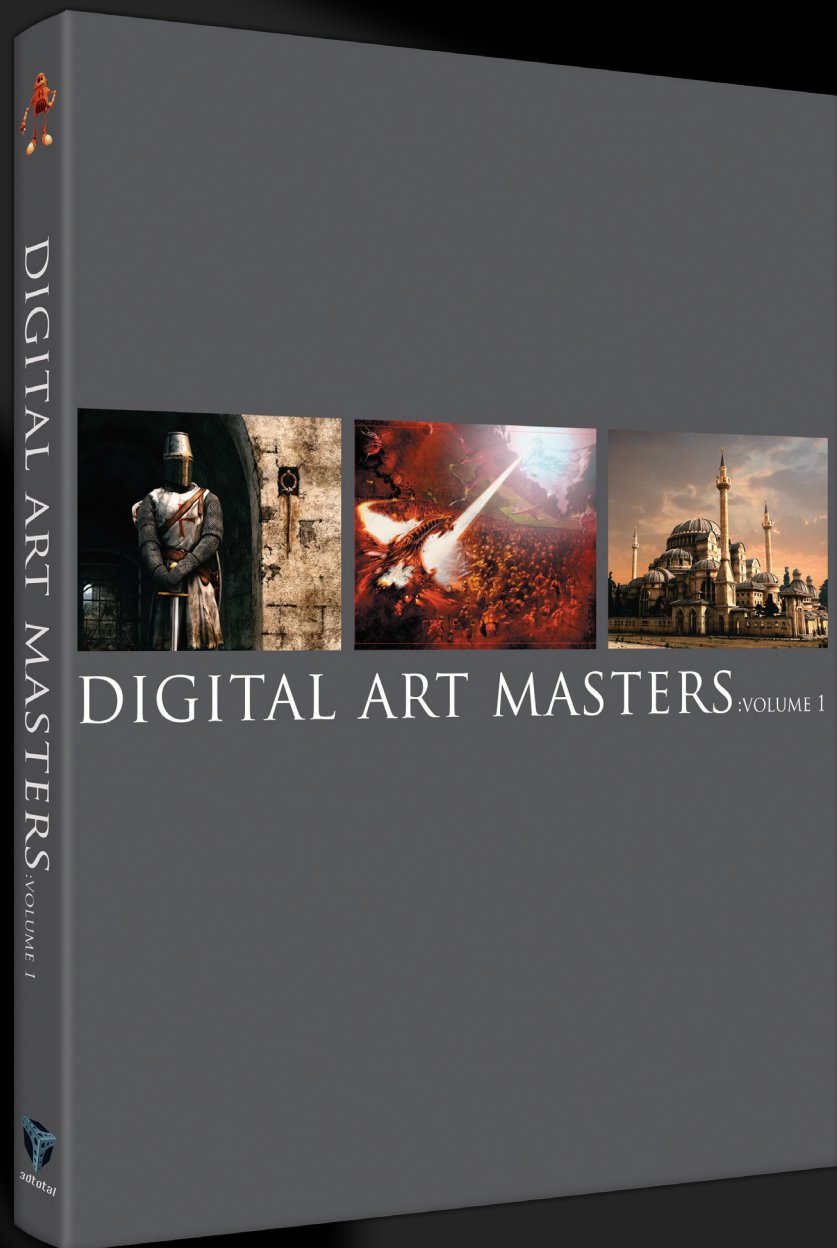


DIGITAL ART MASTERS

: VOLUME 1

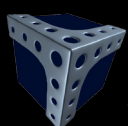
INTRODUCTION:

THE 'DIGITAL ART MASTERS: VOLUME 1' BOOK, IS A COLLECTION OF WORK FROM ARTISTS WHICH HAVE FEATURED IN THE GALLERY OF 3DTOTAL. SPREAD OVER 192 PAGES, THE BOOK FEATURES SOME OF THE FINEST DIGITAL 2D AND 3D ARTWORK THAT YOU CAN SEE TODAY, FROM ARTIST AS NATASCHA ROEOESLI, PHILIP STRAUB, ROB CHANG, JESSE SANDIFER, PISONG, MENY HILSEN-RAD AND RYAN LIM AND MANY MORE. MORE THAN JUST ANY OTHER GALLERY BOOK, EACH ARTIST HAS WRITTEN A BREAKDOWN OVERVIEW, EACH WITH SUPPORTING IMAGERY OF HOW THEY MADE THERE PIECE OF WORK.




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"I THINK THAT BRUSHES
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IMPORTANT EVERY
DAY BECAUSE PEOPLE
ARE SEARCHING FOR
INDIVIDUALITY IN ART. BE
IT THE PERSON CREATING
THE PAINTING OR THE
PERSON CONTEMPLATING
IT. THE LESS BRUSHES
I USE THE MORE
CHARACTER I CAN INFUSE
IN A PAINTING."

Andreas Rocha began his career as an architect before branching out into his current position as a freelance artist. He now works in both 2D and 3D and is experienced in digital painting and illustration, as well as matte painting and 3D visualization.

ANDREAS ROCHA

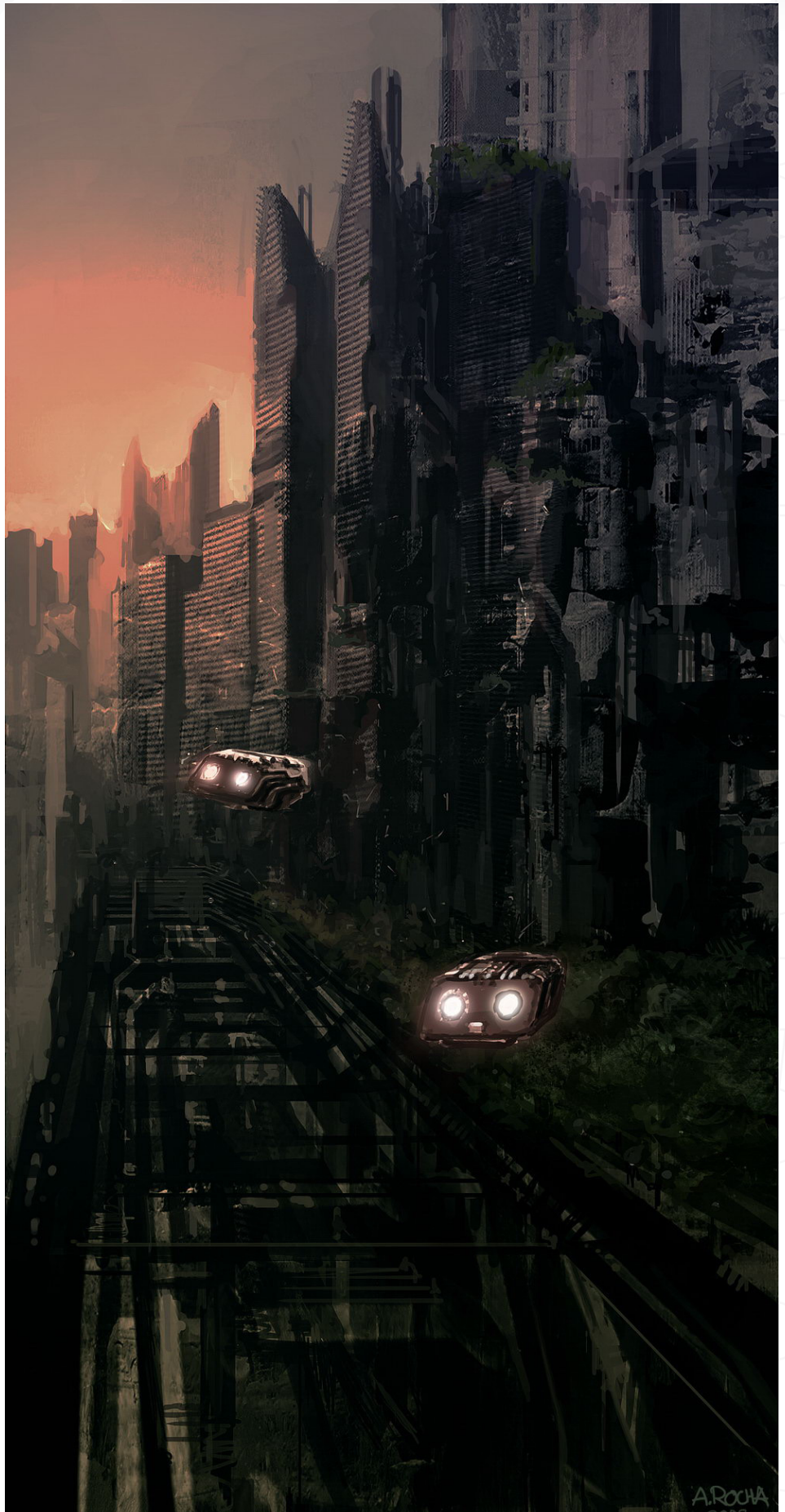
andreas ROCHA

I notice from your profile that you began your career as an architect. What do you feel this training has lent to your success as a digital painter?

Well, it was due to my studies that I learned early on (at least here in Portugal) about the Internet. And that was the main inspiration for everything else to come. But to tell you the truth, I don't really think my (short) career as an architect has helped me directly with digital painting. While I learned about some aspects of colour, shape, composition, etc during my studies, most of what I now know about digital painting came from reading books, practicing and browsing the web. However, I do believe some kind of sensibility resulted from my time at college. I remember the kind of architecture I liked at the beginning of my studies and there's just no comparison with the kind of architecture I liked by the end.

You have a number of gallery categories on your site, but which of the various disciplines has been the most demanding to master?

Certainly it has been human anatomy. I am not saying I am a master at the others... I'm still learning. But anatomy is something that has to be done just right, or everyone will immediately point out the flaws. Environments are much more permissive, as we don't relate to them as closely as we do to anatomy. Criticism can be harsh and un-motivating sometimes, but I will keep on trying, even if it's just for myself.





With regards to human anatomy, I noticed that you have an Erotic category on your site. In order to achieve a sense of realism did these paintings demand a life model ?

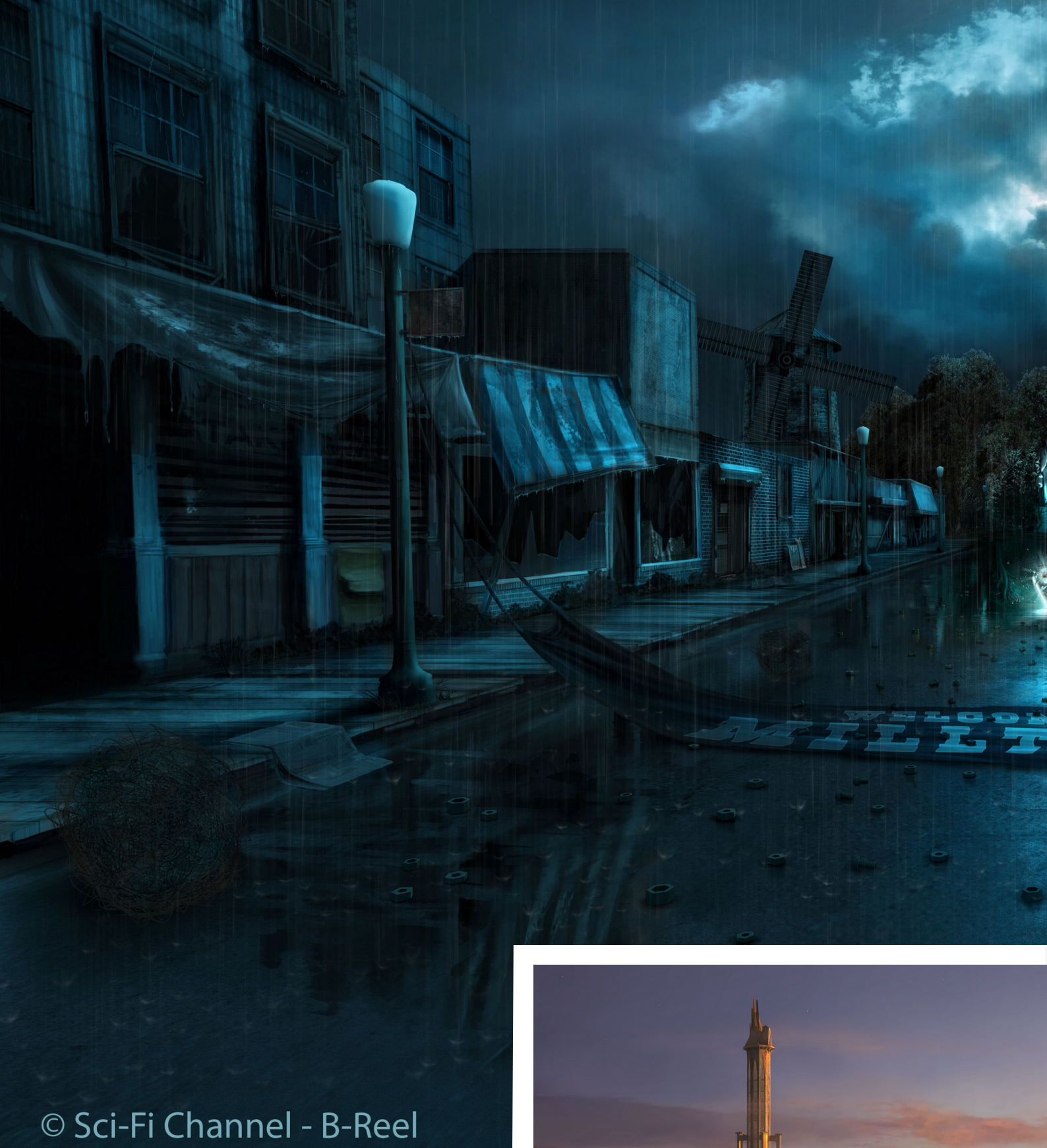
Most of the paintings in the erotic section were based on photographs and not life models. I know that is not the "correct" way to do it, but that is how they were done. However, most of them suffered changes from the original photographs, be it slight lighting and perspective changes or different colours and props. None of them are faithful reproductions of the original photographs and in this way, I think I can achieve some kind of individuality in the search of my own style.

I would love to do erotic paintings from scratch without having to use references, but I think it will take a long time for me to get to that stage.





A. ROCHA
2008

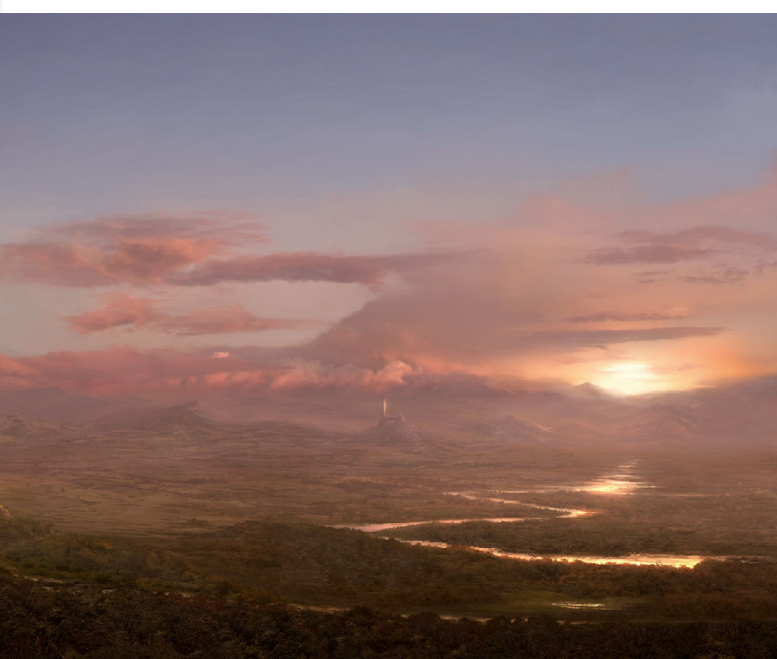


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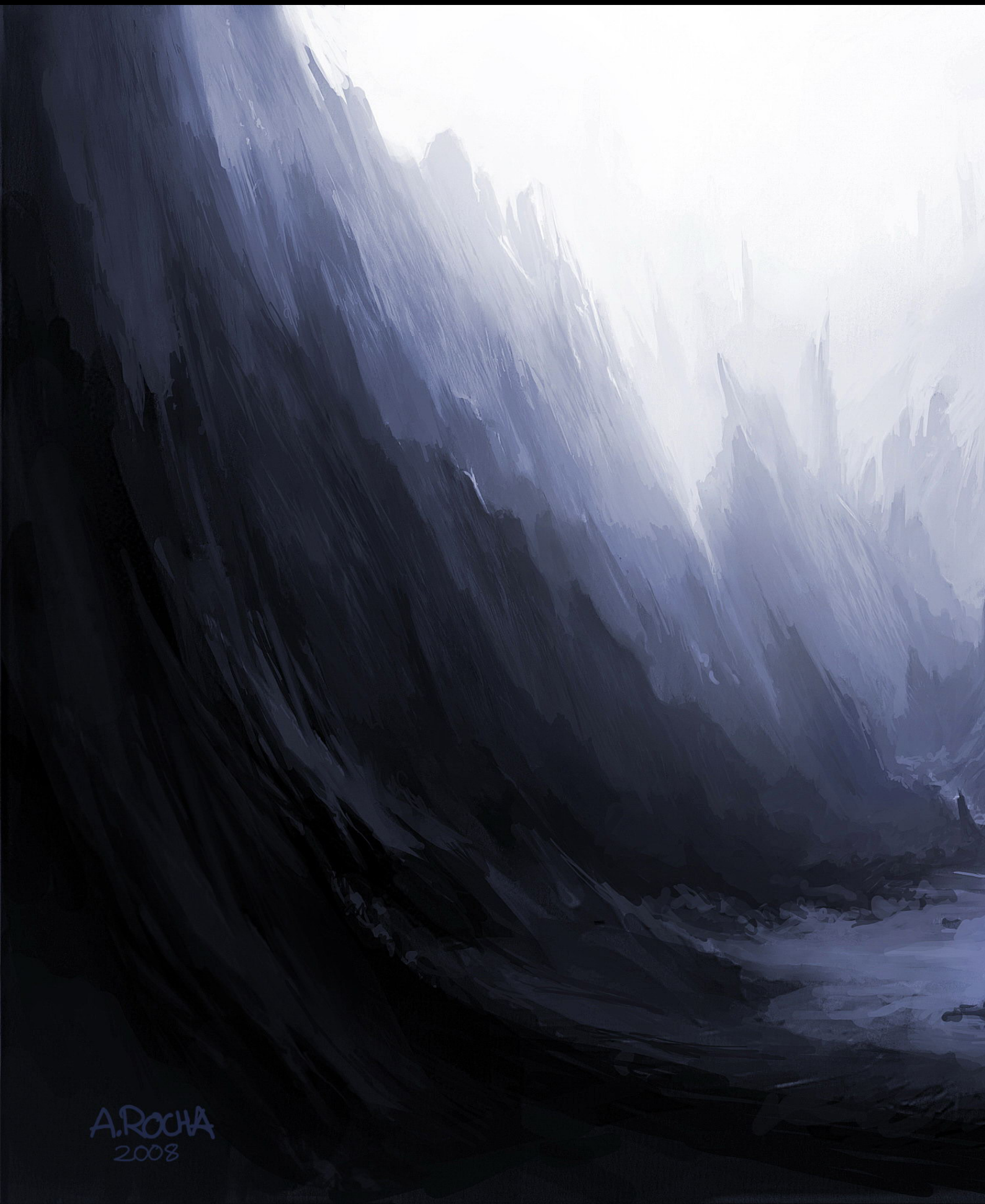
You cover a wide variety of subjects in your portfolio. In general, which do you find the most interesting to work on?

I think it would have to be matte painting. The end result is usually something with a lot of detail, which you can analyse and contemplate longer than a conceptual or character painting. Also a lot more effort goes into a matte painting, so perhaps, in the end, it is more rewarding. Another great thing is the fact that you have to go through the conceptual phase in order to get to the finished painting, which sometimes includes aspects of 3D, so you get to do several different things to reach the end result.





Some matte paintings appear more painterly than others and obviously some work better as a whole whether they are completely constructed of photographic elements or not. What do you think are the crucial aspects to a successful painting and what are the most challenging parts to get right? I think that the more painterly versions always work better than the completely "photographic" ones. By "painterly" I mean that from a certain distance you cannot really make out the brushstrokes, but when you zoom in, all the brushwork becomes apparent and the painting comes to life. Last year I saw two original matte paintings from the *The Empire Strikes*



A.ROCHA
2008



Back and I was completely awestruck. It is really astonishing how realistic a combination of well-placed brushstrokes can look. It is like the painting dictates which areas the viewer should be looking at, the ones with more detail or the ones with loose detail, which just serve as a backdrop. The painting is doing the brainwork for us, which ultimately results in a pleasing painting.

One of the traps that it's easy to fall into with matte paintings, is to overuse photos and end up with a collage of disparate elements. I tend to do an initial speedpainting where composition, lighting and colour work together as a whole. I construct the matte painting on top of that, be it by painting or by overlaying photographs and 3D elements. In this way, all the elements are based on a coherent underpainting that dictates the "rules". Unfortunately, I often tend to lose that initial conceptual feel of the original painting and make everything look too rigid. I sometimes go back and re-introduce some of the initial brushstrokes without making them too apparent.

Do you ever use your knowledge of 3ds Max to help in your 2D work? It's listed in your software list but there's no dedicated 3D category as such in your gallery.

Well, my 3D work is mainly based on 3D architectural visualisations (<http://www.arocho3d.com>), but it is a completely different process. However, I have come to use 3D sometimes to get perspective and lighting right (Infinite OZ – Milltown, for example). However, 3D is a slow process compared to the impulsive brushstrokes of 2D painting, so in order to use 3D as a tool, I have to discipline myself and approach it as a means to reach the desired end more quickly.

In what ways do you combine Corel Painter with Photoshop and what aspects do you find most useful in each when you're painting?

I use them both simultaneously, constantly jumping from one to the other. I believe that





ANDIROCHA
Oct. 2006





A.ROCHA
2008



Photoshop is used almost exclusively for layer work, transformations and colour/levels adjustments. You just can't beat it. I also do a lot of painting in Photoshop, since the logic behind it differs from Painter. In Photoshop there is a constant opacity and colour mode. The only

thing that changes is the brush tip. In Painter it gets much more complex, and the way the tool interacts with the canvas is quite varied. That is where Photoshop can't beat Painter. The textural possibilities of Painter are really fantastic and the way applied colour interacts

with existing colour is just amazing. Sometimes I use Painter exclusively, from start to finish to maintain texture. Sometimes I use Photoshop especially for detail work, with its hard-edged circular brushes. Normal blending of colours can only be done in Painter.





What impact do you think the range of brushes add to the quality of digital painting nowadays? Do you think a single, simple brush can carry a work if the crucial components such as composition, tonal ranges and colour are all well conceived?

I think that brushes are getting less important

every day because people are searching for individuality in art, be it the person creating the painting or the person contemplating it. The less brushes I use the more character I can infuse in a painting, because the way the brushstrokes are applied is what creates the painting. I see a lot of artists using the hard edged circular brush

with pressure set to opacity, because it is one of the best digital tools out there. It's simple but it's really effective. The way it is used is what makes the painting unique.


How easy is it to survive as a freelancer for those readers wishing to embark down this career path?

For me it turned out to be not so difficult as I thought it would be. I believed my main activity would be 3D architectural visualisations, but as it turned, 2D and 3D are almost side by side and now I work with both. It is really important to promote yourself on the Internet and have a decent portfolio with your best works (don't include the lesser ones, only because you did them). Also, keep updating each year, removing those works which don't compare to the new stuff. Don't stop learning, either. That was one of the great things about going freelance. It allowed me to invest much more time in knowledge and training.









Where do you find most of your commissions come from and what sectors of the industry do you find the most stimulating with respect to the types of jobs on offer?

I cannot say that most of the commissions come from one place, because they are really varied at the moment. I have done conceptual work, matte paintings for advertising, photo manipulation and realistic painting for advertising ads, digital paintings with a traditional feel for books, illustration for covers, etc. I never know what to expect next.

And finally which artists' or subject matter has had the most impact on your work?

When I started to hear of speedpainting I didn't know what it really was, but it sure had an impact in my work. There are some really great artists that excel at it, like Mathias Verhasselt, Levente Peterffy, and the almighty Craig Mullins, to name but a few. Analysing their work taught me how to let go of restrictions and face a blank canvas with much more confidence. Most of my work goes through a speedpainting phase now.

ANDREAS ROCHA

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.andreasrocha.com/

Or contact them at:

rocha.andreas@gmail.com

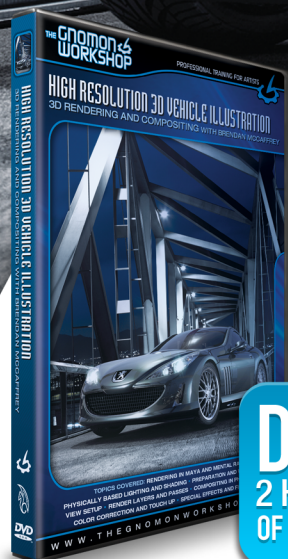
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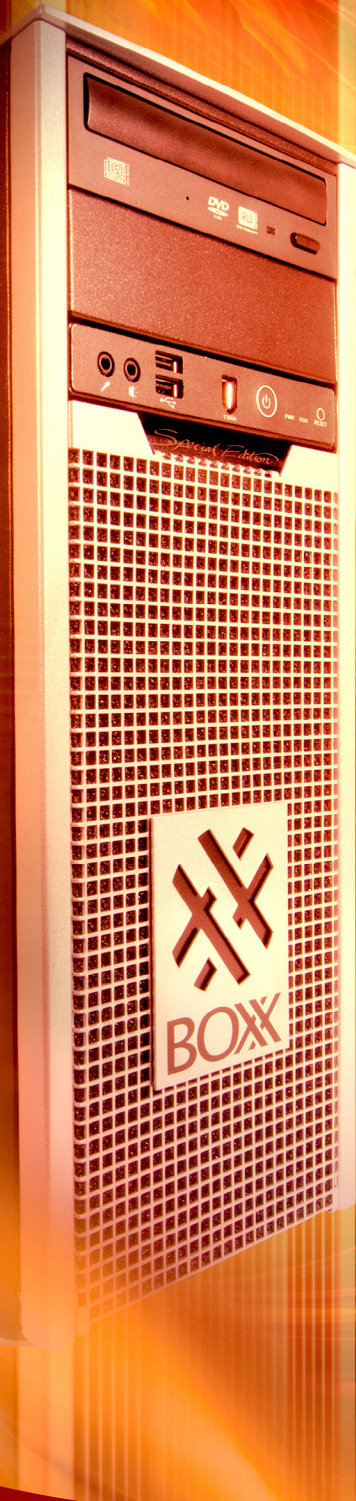
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Michael Kutsche is an award-winning Conceptual Artist, Illustrator and 3D Artist located in Berlin, Germany, who has worked for the VFX industry since 1998. His experiences reach from art directing and animating commercials and music videos, to lead design for future feature film projects...

MICHAEL KUTSCHE

"BASICALLY. IT'S ALL ABOUT ART AND CREATIVITY AND INVENTING NEW VISUAL AESTHETICS. WHETHER THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL OR FRIGHTENING. THERE WOULD BE NO REAL IMPACT IF SOMEONE SEES SOMETHING WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE..."

MICHAEL KUTSCHE

Hey Michael! Your portfolio is outstanding, one of the best I have ever seen! It looks like you have a lot of experience behind you, so how long have you been in this game and what got you started?

Thanks a lot for the compliment! Basically, I've been familiar with pencils, crayons and stuff for longer than I can remember; while the other kids were singing and playing in kindergarten, I was sitting in a calm corner of the room, doodling. I got my first jobs while I was still at school, creating designs for flyers and T-shirts. After school, in 1998, I was hired



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by a 3D company where I could make my dream come true and bring my character designs to life with the help of 3D software. I was doing designs, storyboards, modelling, animation, texturing – and all that stuff – for music videos and commercials. Some of them have been awarded at several 3D festivals! I had my first contact with a Wacom pretty late in 2002, which really got me hooked because with all those hours watching the rendering window on the monitor, I was able to paint stuff that looked like 3D but without pushing vertexes and polygons around – and also without the time-consuming process of painting with oils or anything!

Actually, it got me hooked so much that I am now fully concentrating on production design and illustration, and have been for some years, with the advantage of knowing the whole production process behind 3D animation.

I think your broad knowledge base of 2D and 3D is definitely reflected in your work. Have you tried packages such as ZBrush or Mudbox? Of course! It takes too long compared to my usual painting technique to use it for my





projects, but ZBrush 3 is a killer tool! I have a lot of fun playing around with that way of modelling, using it with a Cintiq is like, "Yes! This is the future!" Painter is a synonym for the translation of traditional paint media into the digital universe, and ZBrush3 is the counterpart in terms of intuitive digital clay sculpting. I know one can use ZBrush also as a 2D painting tool, but I guess I haven't tried that because I feel very comfortable with Painter for that stuff.

Characters are obviously a very popular choice for your art, but within this category you seem to branch out a lot: photo real, stylised, 2D, 3D, fun, fantasy... So what are your favourite styles and what kind of commissions really get you excited?



All these kinds of styles are challenging when you try to keep away from automatism. Basically, it's all about art and creativity and inventing new visual aesthetics, whether they are beautiful or frightening. There would be no real impact if someone sees something which has already been done a hundred times before. That's why I try not to stick to a theme like fantasy or science fiction; I see myself as an inventor and artist, not a "fantasy artist" or "street artist".

After all, my favourite style is ideally not named yet. I love to do my personal art stuff and what gets me really excited are film or game projects, where there's space for loads of creativity instead of a too-fixed briefing. Art is always a fight for freedom, somehow!

That's such a good answer it's made my brain jam up and I can't think of a follow on question... Er, OK... Do you ever find you push the boundaries of a brief a bit too far and your employees have to bring you back down to earth a bit?

Since I'm kind of experienced with those situations by now, I pretty often send my first sketch and get an approval by the client, without



with, because I saw the limitations of the briefing more than the possibilities, and that turned out to be a pain-in-the-ass with lots of versions and confusion. Now I don't send lots of half-ready versions, I found out that it's better to send just one which is rather finalised and on-point. But of course, back then I simply wasn't experienced enough to do that. My philosophy is somehow: Do what you love, and the client will most likely love it, too!

You have worked for many big named clients: Sega, Sony, BMW, Saatchi & Saatchi to name but a few. I imagine you must have worked for many small clients, too. What are the main differences in working for the big named companies, as opposed to the "little guys"? When there's more money, there's likely to also be more time to invest in the creative process and perfectionism. But it always depends on the project, product and client, and how far you can go creatively.

Do you have any 'Golden Rules' that you try to follow with your art?

The only rule that always remains for me is to do something original, and that sometimes means to abandon some other 'Golden Rules'.

That's great advice, but surely you are inspired by many other artworks you see. Do you think they in turn influence your work in any way?

I think inspiration is where every artist's journey starts. I bet every artist out there would agree with that! I've got a lot of books of my favourite artists Moebius and Otomo, but also painters like Lucian Freud and Jenny Saville have of course influenced me.

The challenge will always be to invent enough stuff on your own.

No artist wants to be the clone of another artist, which is why it's so important to find your own techniques of creativity!

One of your latest images, "The Boxer", is a real attention grabber! Can you tell us some points about the background and the process behind this one?

"The Boxer" was a personal research project to find an uncommon character design. I didn't really spend much time on it, so I'm really happy how this turned out.

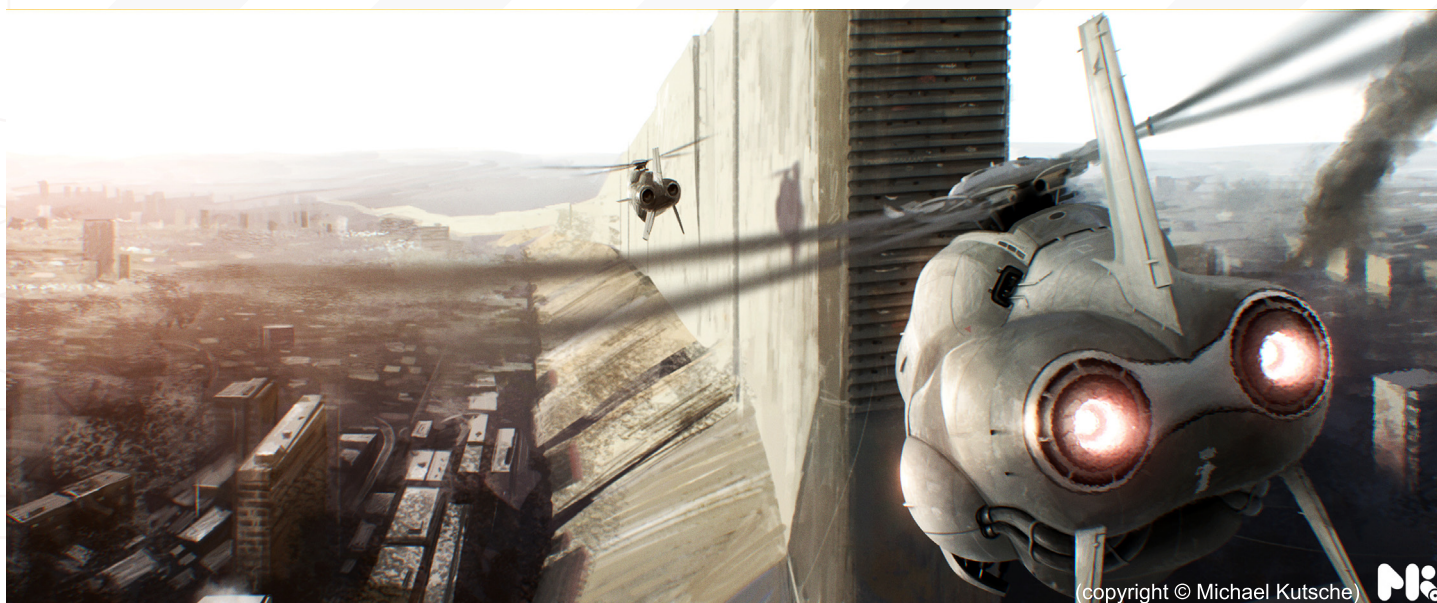


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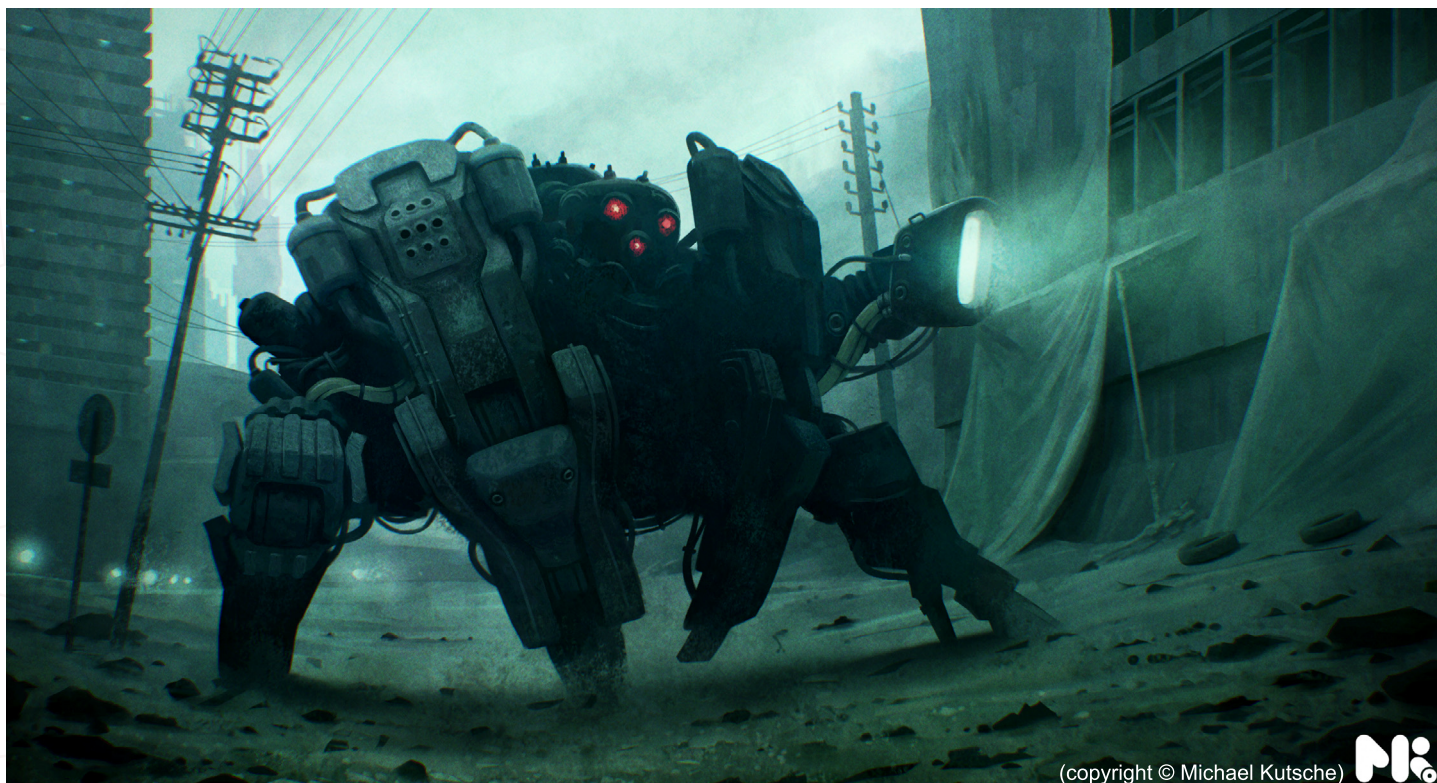


There already exists a lot of anthropomorphic animals in old books, comics and animation movies, so I believe it's not special because of the man/pig thing. I think what makes the difference is that it seems believable, and that is also what challenges me the most with that kind of stuff. To put something which is usually too far out or too abstract on a believable level, so that it has a presence like the person that is in the same room with you, makes it only more threatening.

"Anthropomorphic", now that is a good word! I hate to admit that I had to Google it, but for others, like me, who don't know what it means, it's "the attribution of uniquely human characteristics to non-human beings", which leads me nicely onto my final question... We just had a conversation in our studio about the film "The Fly", when the main guy gets teleported with a fly and starts to develop the fly's features and bodily functions. So, Michael, if you were being teleported and an animal

jumped in with you, what animal would you want it to be and why!?

A fly would be a nice try, seeing the world in slow motion and with that weird 360 degree view of 4000 eyes, like on drugs! Being a protozoan could be even more exciting, assuming that I would be able to keep my actual brain... Wouldn't it be awesome to see all that bizarre stuff that we are only able to see with electron micrograph technology, but in realtime, each water drop as big as a universe...?



MICHAEL KUTSCHE

For more work by this artist please visit:

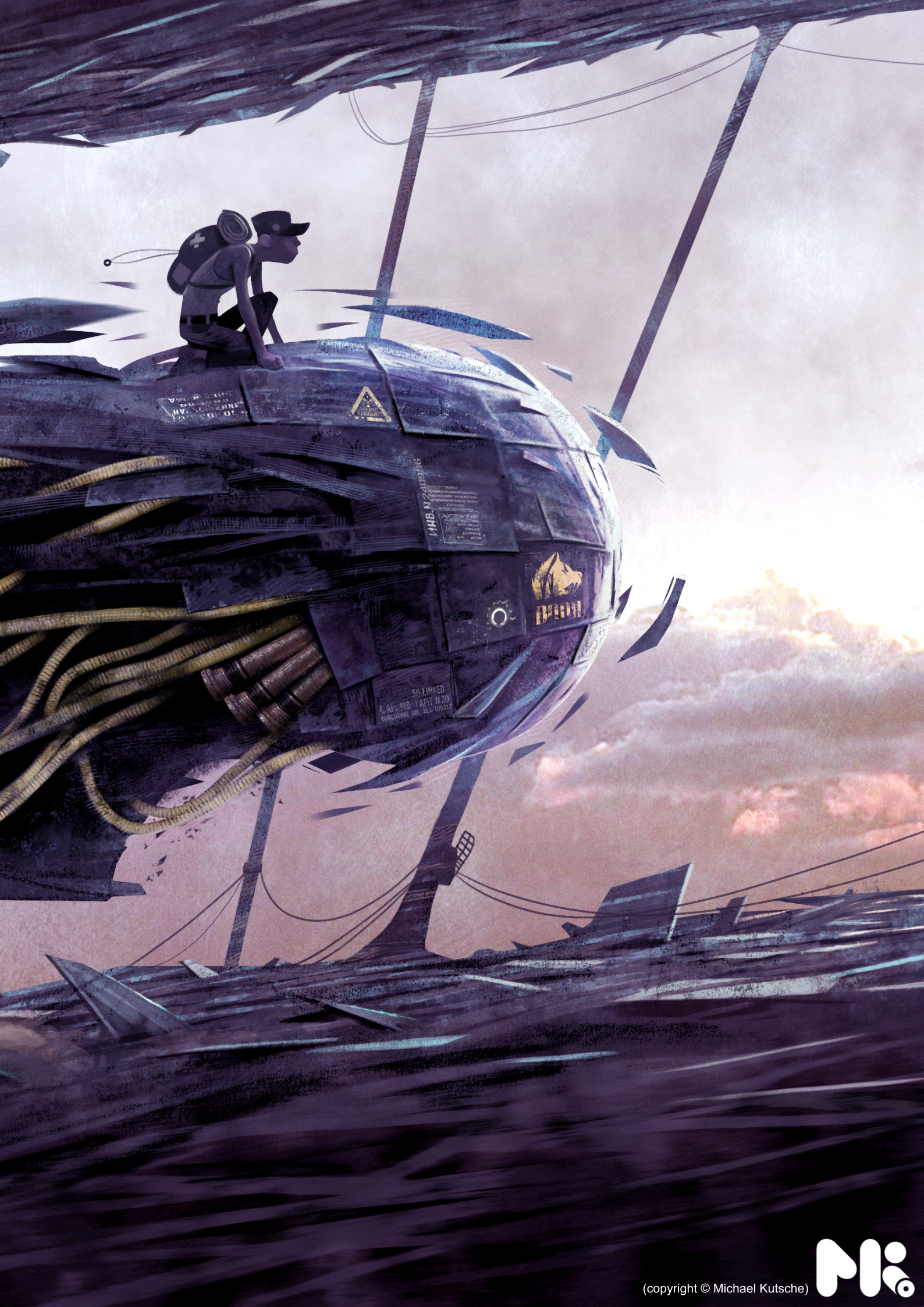
www.mistermk.de

Or contact them at:

mk3000@gmx.net

Interviewed by: Tom Greenway





Evolve at SIGGRAPH2008

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"A GREAT THING ABOUT
BEING AN ARTIST IS THAT
THERE IS NEVER AN END
TO LEARNING. AND THERE
IS ALWAYS SOMETHING
NEW AND EXCITING..."



the *Sketchbook* of **Peter Chan**

Peter Chan is both a traditional and digital artist who carries his sketchbook with him wherever he goes. It is therefore no wonder why we asked him this month to talk us through the journey that takes him from concept through to sketch to final painting – be it of the traditional or digital variety. Enjoy!

What is a sketchbook? A sketchbook to me is like a visual journal. It is one of the few things (like my keys or my cell phone) that I like to carry around with me everywhere. On the train, to a restaurant, to a friend's house, I just like to carry it with me because I never know when an image or idea might strike. A sketchbook can be very personal or can be very typical. It is about who you are as an artist (Fig.01, Fig.02, fig.03 and Fig.04).

The process of my sketchbook is to keep myself warmed up in drawing and ultimately the ideas and sketches help me develop my concepts for a final colour painting, either in oils or digital. In this article, I have decided



Fig.01



Fig.02

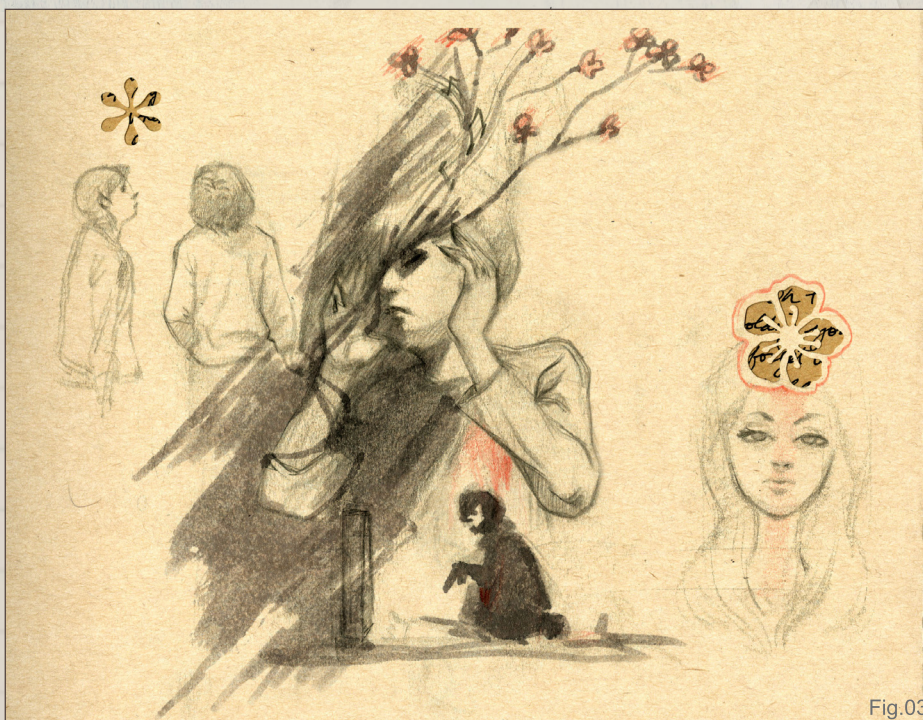
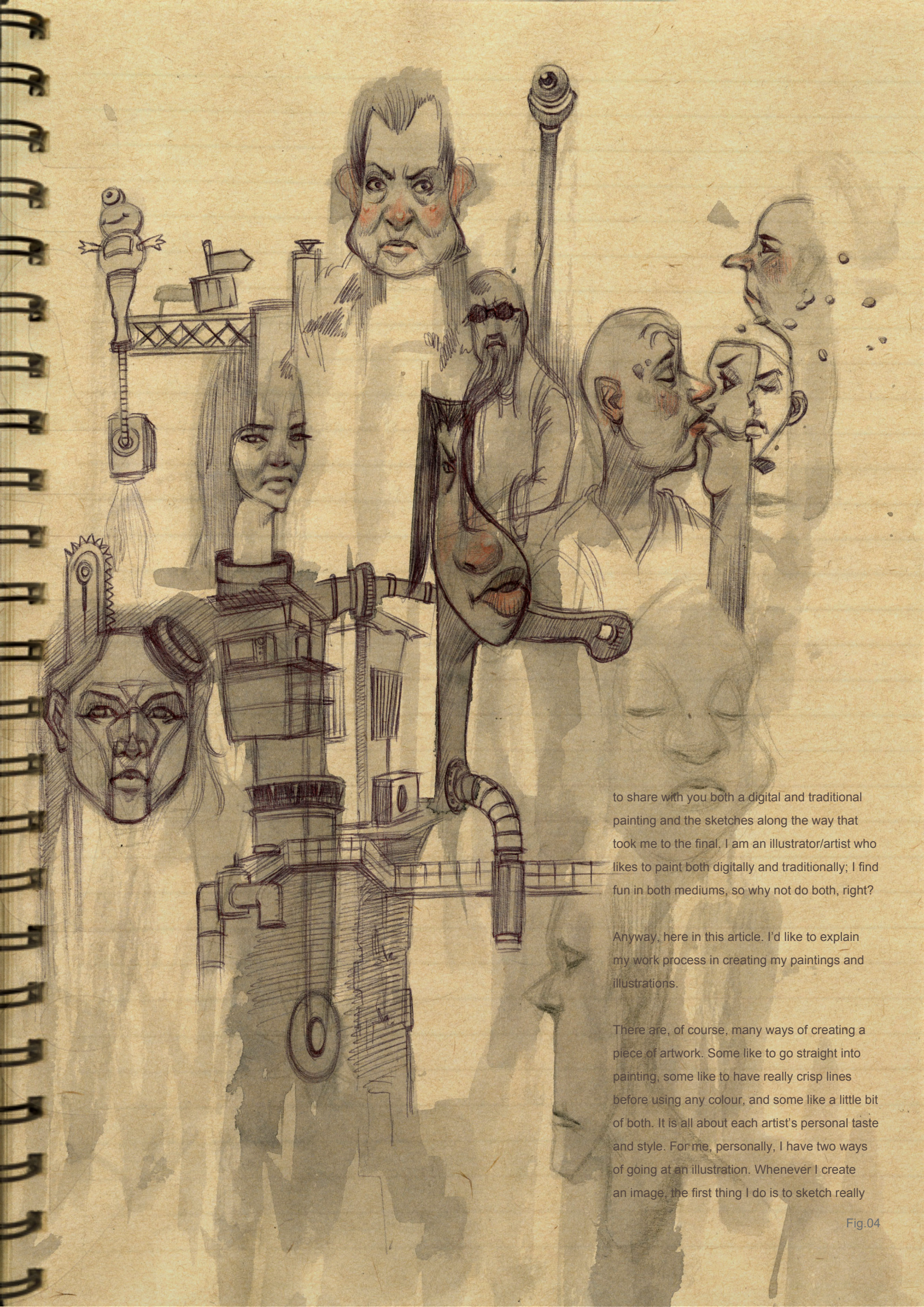


Fig.03



to share with you both a digital and traditional painting and the sketches along the way that took me to the final. I am an illustrator/artist who likes to paint both digitally and traditionally; I find fun in both mediums, so why not do both, right?

Anyway, here in this article. I'd like to explain my work process in creating my paintings and illustrations.

There are, of course, many ways of creating a piece of artwork. Some like to go straight into painting, some like to have really crisp lines before using any colour, and some like a little bit of both. It is all about each artist's personal taste and style. For me, personally, I have two ways of going at an illustration. Whenever I create an image, the first thing I do is to sketch really

loosely. By doing this, it gives me a chance to explore multiple options of an image. Over the years, I am starting to learn not to rush into painting before I develop a concept sketch that I'll enjoy painting. By concept sketch, for me, it might be something really rough, most of the time it'd be a thumbnail sketch or a few small sketches based on the character I am trying to create (Fig.05 and Fig.06).



Fig.05

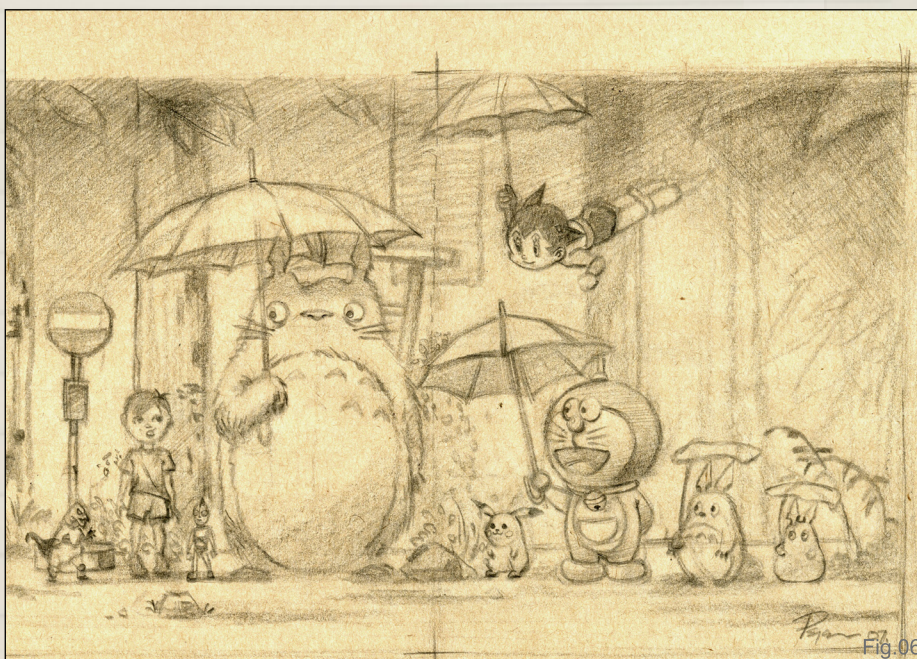


Fig.06



Fig.07

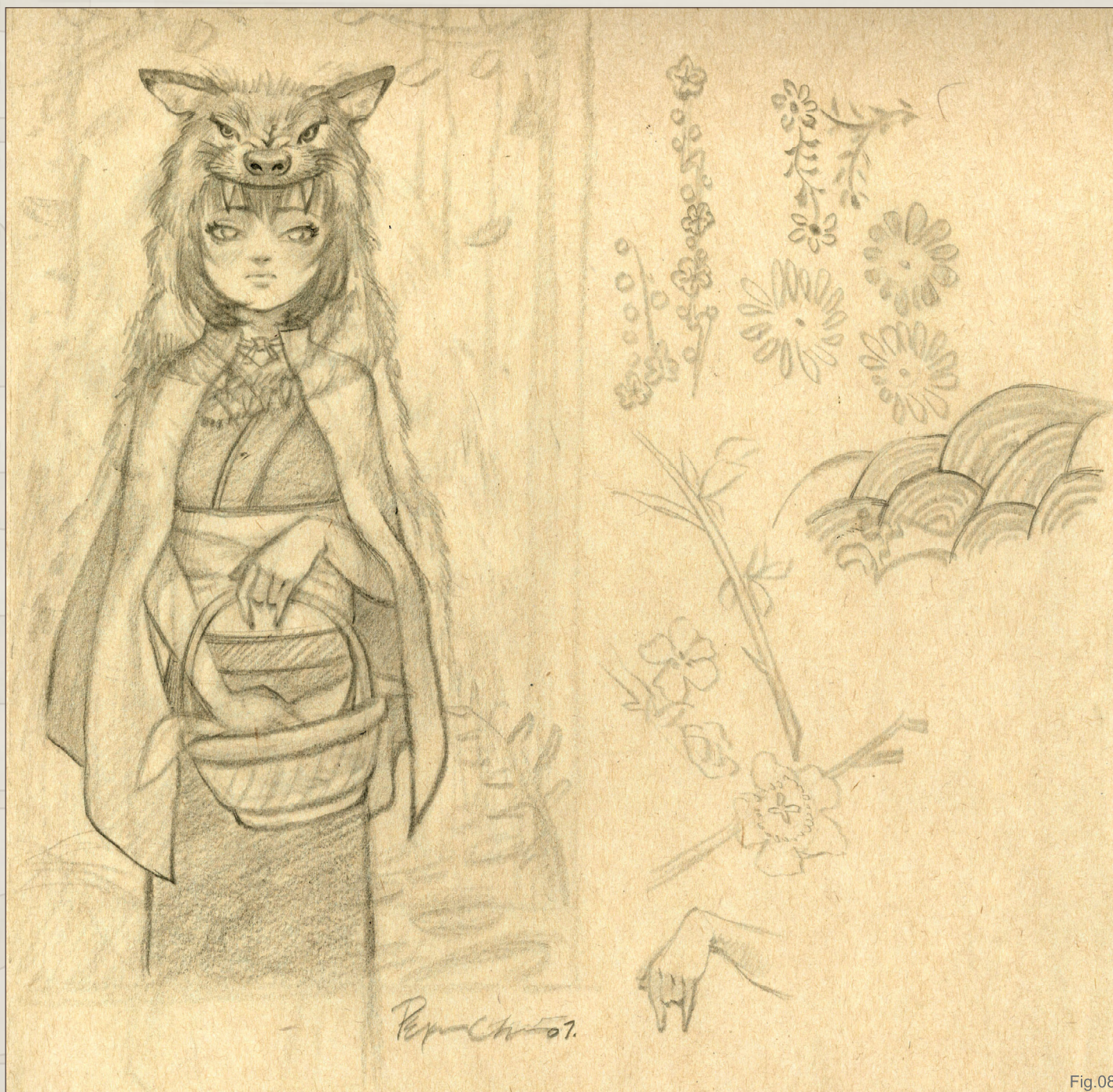


Fig.08

So once I have the concept sketch down, I then start to flush out the sketch, trying to do all this but still trying to keep the sketch loose. So over the years, I have developed (Fig.07).

After a few preliminary sketches and ideas, I start tightening the sketch some more. Usually at this stage, I have to do some research on posing, textures, perspective, etc. So a final tightened sketch is to come after this stage.

Here is an example of this working process, in this sketch (Fig.08) is a sample of the process of a painting I did called "Red Wolf Hood"

(Fig.09). I have included preliminary sketches, final sketch and the final painting to show my working process. As you can see, I'd first sketch out different faces and features to decide on how I want the overall look to be.

Then I'd move on to a final sketch and, in this case, onto an oil painting I did on a piece of wood.

When creating my final sketches, a good thing to keep in mind is the lighting of the figure/object (yes, even at the sketch stage, because it will help you a lot in the next step: the black and white tonal and/or colour). Having this in mind allows me to use a certain type of line work to apply



Fig.09

to my drawings. I keep in mind where the light is because I will use a lighter, thinner and sharper line, but wherever the shadows are I'll use a darker, thicker and softer line (Fig.10).

All this building up eventually leads to a final concept for my image. Then I can scan it in and paint it digitally, or I can transfer it to a surface and paint it traditionally.

Here I have included a handful of observational sketches I did on the go – whenever I was on the subway, bus, train, the mall, or whenever the opportunity was available. This, I find, is a great practice, and at the very least it can help enhance ourselves (instead of playing the newest game on that handheld console!).

For anyone just getting into art, I would also like to offer a little bit of advice. It might be boring, and you've probably heard this a few times already, but observational sketches are really important in building your knowledge of how to draw. It is good to know how people and other living beings pose; photos are great of course, but nothing beats drawing or painting from life! I would say that by drawing from life it can translate into drawing from memory, and that is essential in creating great illustrations (Fig.11 and Fig.12).



Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12

part 4: "My breathing is short and my heart keeps on tremble. Oh, the first time when I'm holding your hands, I become lost, forget where we should go. That is the reason for our love, To me, it makes me feel that you belong to me. Look into your eyes, Without further doubt I know, Our love is true."

part 5: "Oh, the first time when I say I love you, My breathing is short and my heart keeps on tremble. Oh the first time when I'm holding your hands, I become lost, forget where we should go. That is the reason for our love, which is our life to be together forever and ever. Oh, the first kiss, watching your lovely cheeks, want to keep my virtue, instead, falling into the ripples of that moment."

part 6: "Oh, the first time you lay on my chest. For 24 hours, we are holding on to each other. That is the first time I know the meaning of forever."

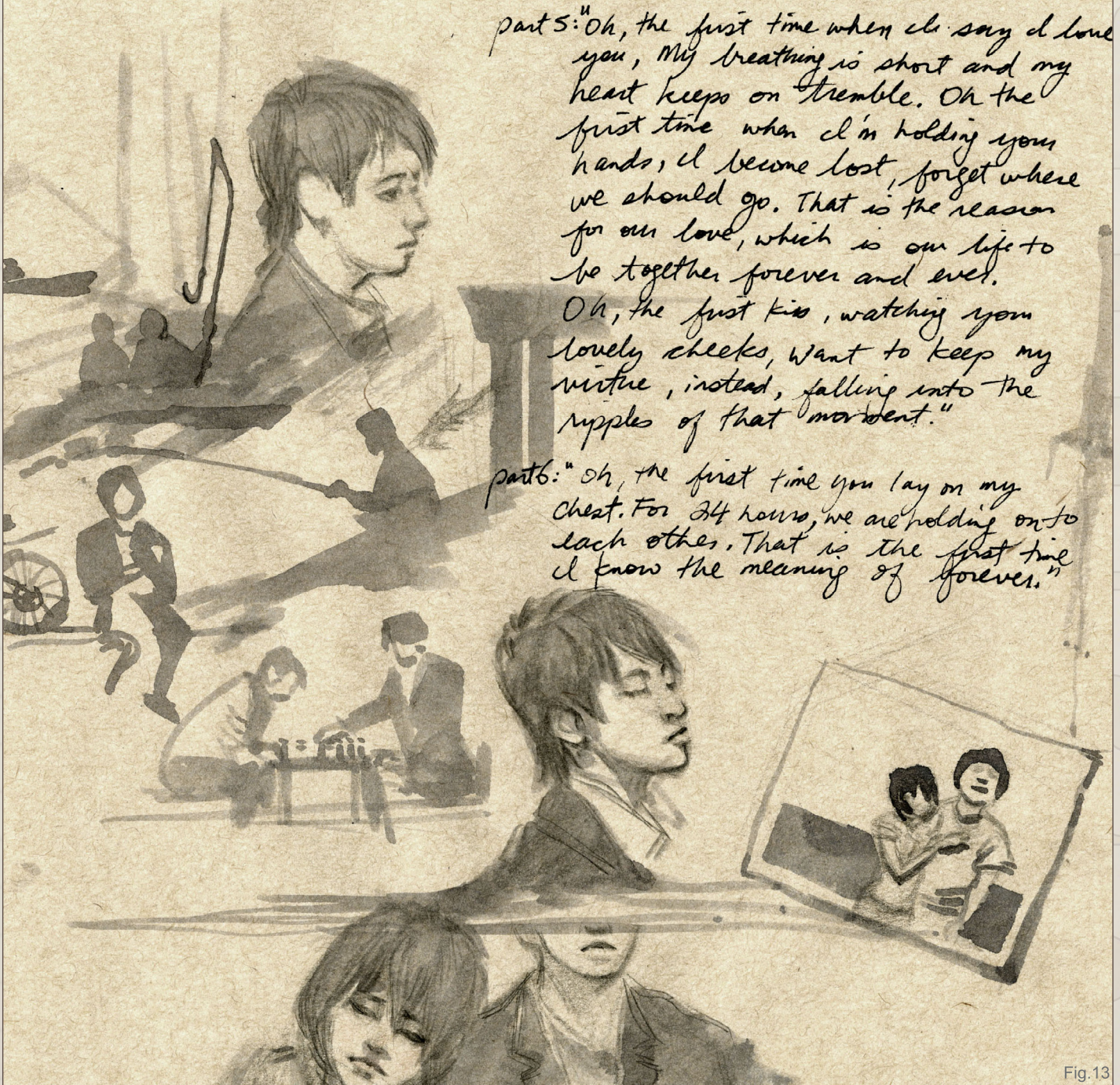


Fig.13

I still have a lot to learn myself, because the learning never stops. A great thing about being an artist is there is never an end to learning and there is always something new

and exciting. I hope what I said here will help someone in someway. I really believe in giving back to the art community because I remember the days when I really sought for knowledge

and help as I drew my first few drawings. Even today, I am still constantly fascinated and inspired by other great artists whom I constantly discover.

Thank you again for reading this. If you are interested in other sketches, paintings and art from me, please visit peterchanart.com. Thank you! (Fig.13 and Fig.14)

PETER CHAN

For more information please visit

www.peterchanart.com

or contact

info@peterchanart.com

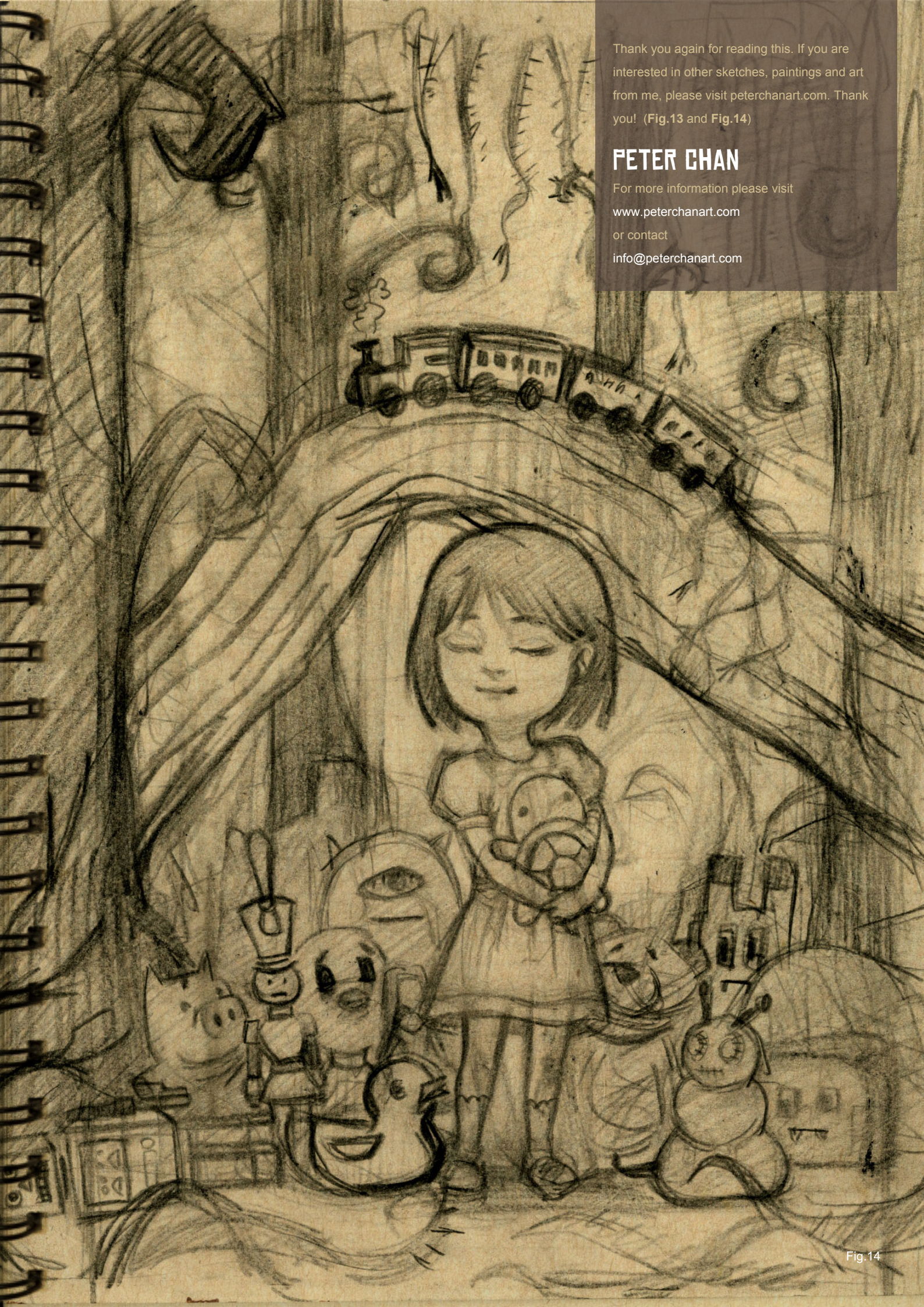


Fig.14

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VFS student work by Zack Mathew

STREET



This month we feature:

Yap Kun Rong

Robin Olausson

Andrew Berends

Tobias Trebeljahr

Romain Gouzenne

Craig Sellars

Ron Crabb

Yu Cheng Hong

George Patsouras

Nykolai Aleksander



CAVE DWELLERS

Yap Kun Rong

<http://krypt.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

yap.kunrong@yahoo.com

INDIANA JONES AND THE SECRETS FROM BEYOND

George Patsouras

<http://cgaddict.blogspot.com>

cgaddict@live.com



KEEP A SHARP EYE

Ron Crabb

www.crabbdigital.com

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tv1000@spray.se

SCALDER COVE

Tobias Trebeljahr

totrebeljahr@gmx.de





ASTRONAUT

Craig Sellars

www.greensocksart.com

sellarsart@hotmail.com

BACKLIGHTING

Romain Gouzenne

<http://rtg65.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

romain.gouzenne@neuf.fr



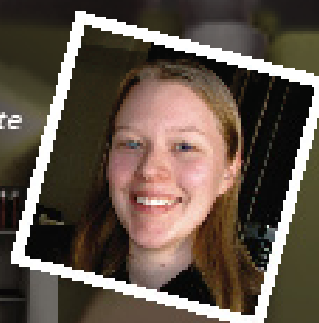
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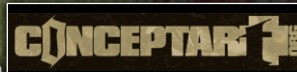
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the 2DA Challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the 'Challenge' section of the mag. Every month we will run challenges, available for anyone to enter for prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop and also to be featured in this very magazine! The 2D Challenge runs in the ConceptArt.org forums, and the 3D challenge runs in the Threedy.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the 'Making Of's from the month before that!

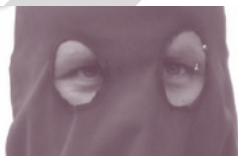
Executioner!

Stylised challenge



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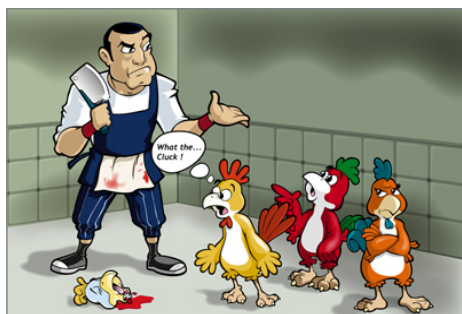


Stylised Challenge

EXECUTIONER

THE CHALLENGE

Welcome to the Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select a subject and post some images in the forum thread as reference. All you have to do is create a 2D image of this subject in a stylised/abstract/cartoon style, whilst keeping your entry instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised subjects, such as animals and characters, such as you see in the many



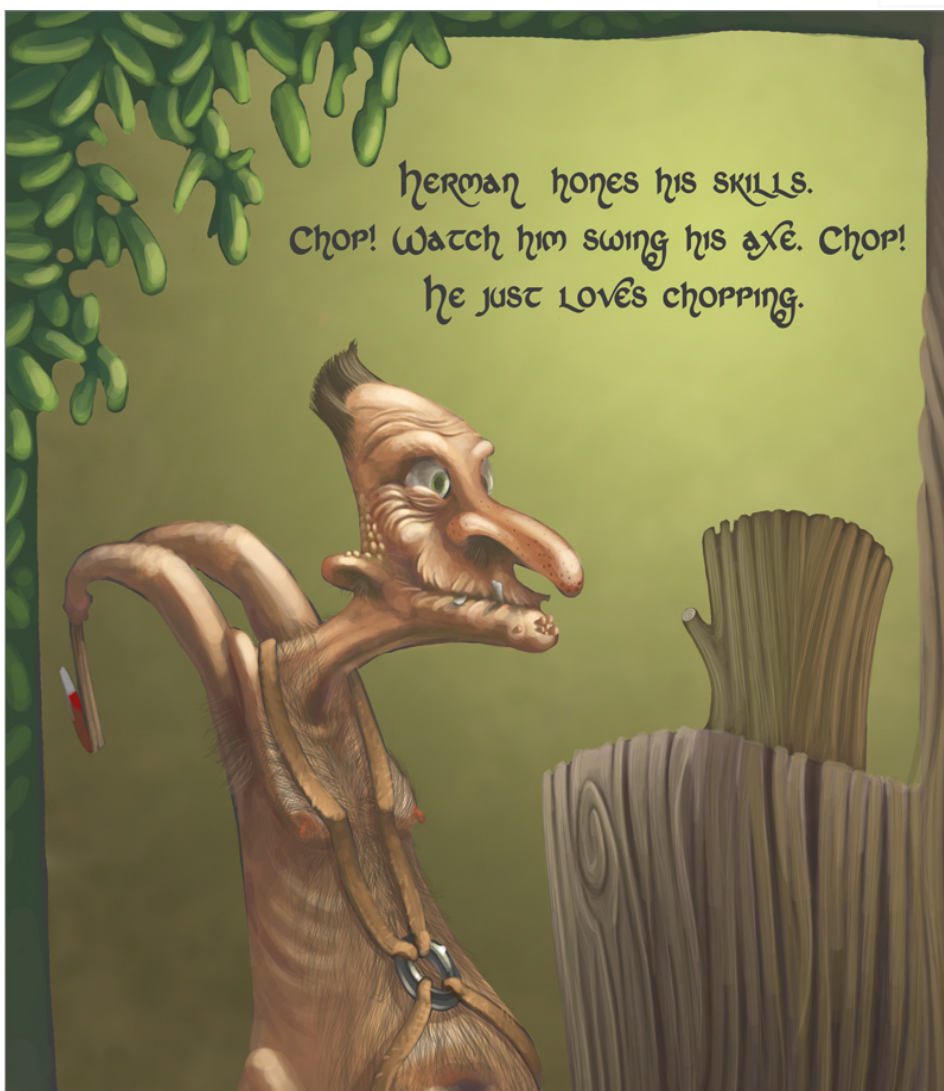
10TH: THE ANTARCTICAN



10TH: MADHATTER106



10TH: SAWA



8TH: SCARYPOTATO

feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and Making Of's that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's subject was "The Executioner". Here you can see the top nine entries, as voted for by the public!



7TH: JPEDRO

jpedro@jpedro.com



6TH: RVDTOR



5TH: FREAKDESIGN

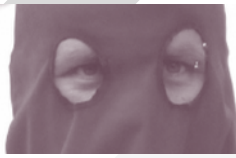
<http://www.freakdesign.com.au>
freakdesign@gmail.com

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Funny and humorous entries that break the character down into its most recognisable components. Emphasise these in whichever ways you wish and render your stylised/abstract/cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 2D render (minor post work is OK).



4TH: SHATTEREDFX



3: TOMMOY

<http://www.thecartoonfactory.nl>
info@thecartoonfactory.nl



1: CHUCK.MATE

<http://www.chuckmate.blogspot.com>
pat2003b@yahoo.com



2: DAVENEALE

<http://www.daveneale.co.uk>
davejneale@hotmail.com

It's up to you if you want to have a background or if you want include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher resolution images too, all the better!

There will be one competition per month with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal.com or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation, different elements, and some brief explanation text of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content!

Stylised Challenge **EXECUTIONER.**

Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIPs, give feedback, and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month!

CHALLENGE THREAD

The entire **EXECUTIONER** competition can be viewed here!

The current challenge at the voting stage is:

CAVEMAN

The current challenge taking place is:

CARNIVOROUS PLANT

To join the next challenge, or to view previous and/or current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

Or, for the 3D challenge, please visit:

www.threedy.com

Or contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com

3D CHALLENGE

Here are last month's top entries from the 3D Challenge!



3RD - CHUBU

www.2dartistmag.com

2d
Artist



1ST - STROGGTANK

strogg_tank@hotmail.com



2ND - DADDY DOOM

pedroldaniel@netcabo.pt

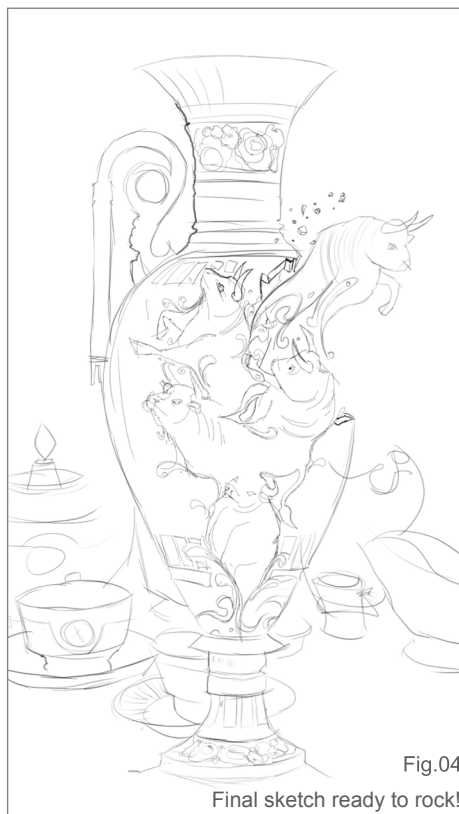
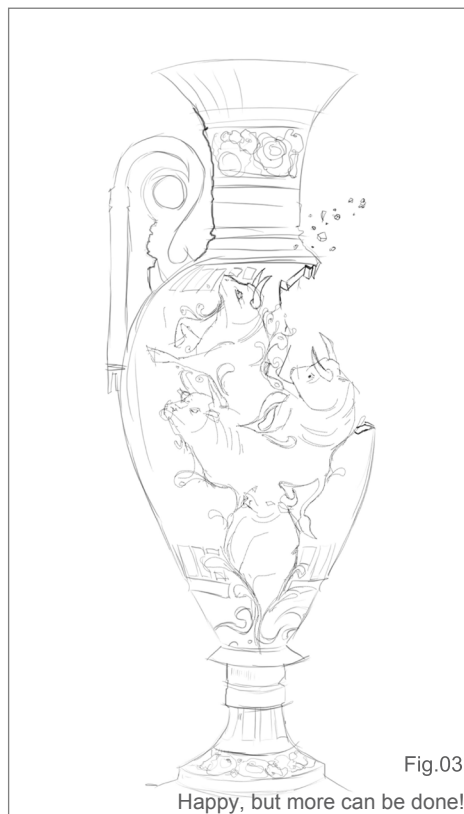
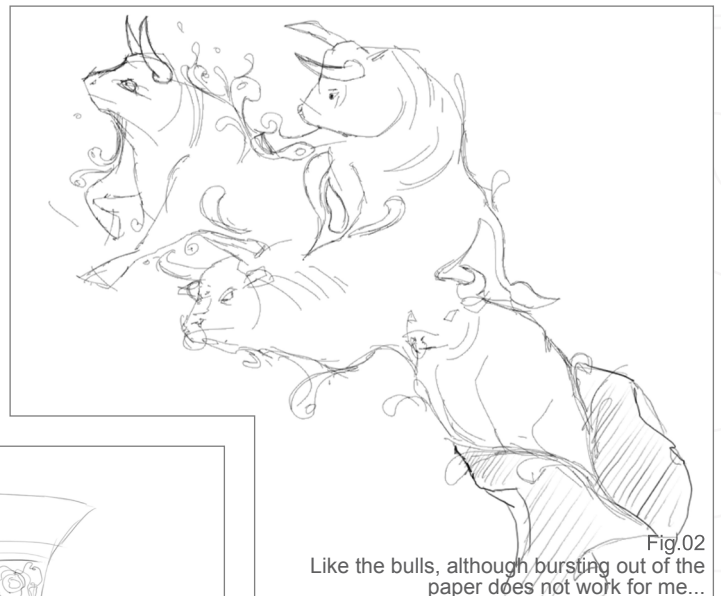
MAKING OFS

Here are the Making Of's from last month's top 3 winning entries!

3RD - JASON BOWMAN

1: The ConceptArt.org theme of Bull in a China Shop invoked fun ideas of expensive things getting broken by an out of control beast. As the creative process would have it, the end result did not match up with this thinking but the end result was worth the journey. Hopefully this quick guide will give you an idea of how this piece came together. The original concept had a lone bull bursting through the poster covered window of a china shop. Imagine, if you will, a bull with wild eyes that reveal terrified customers in the reflections; thick (dragon-like) smoke from the nostrils and a serious explosion of glass and china. Sounds cool, right? I liked that idea for about an hour but did not revisit it for a few days (**Fig.01**).

2: With a clean sheet of A3 and a sharpened 2B pencil I set off on a variation, but not before pulling out some cow and bull resources to get acquainted with the bull's body structure. I decided to tilt the thinking a bit and shift the concept to having a fluid-like stream of bulls bursting through a china shop advertising poster. The bulls came out looking cool so all I needed to come up with was the right poster design to compliment things. I had some existing poster ideas from the previous concept so figured I would just freehand around it quickly and lay it out in Illustrator, like I would any poster (**Fig.02**).



3: Now you might begin to sense a recurring indecisive process here... A few pencil strokes into the poster sketch, the concept shifted again from bulls bursting out of the China Shop poster to bursting out of the China Vase itself. Still within the theme? Maybe (just the way I like it!)

So pencils and light box got to work and I figured out a nice design for the vase which made good use of the previous bull sketch. There's no sense in letting previous work go to waste!

As homage to the ConceptArt.org theme and original concept, I left a chunk of the vase



Fig.05

Sketch in. Background test. Colour tests begin...



Fig.06

Continuing with colouring, adding basic gradients to form colour bed....



Fig.07

Shadow and highlights time! And some more colour testing...



Fig.08

Shadow adjustment, colour changes (of course!) and details...

broken. It seemed to work well as a design and the asymmetry had a nice flow to it. Just a few more details will make this sketch complete (**Fig.03**).

4: For that little extra something I added a bull leaping from the vase and threw in the some other china to complete the scene. At this point I considered the sketch done and this marked the point to scan it at a silly resolution. I like to make huge prints of my work so the bigger we can start at the more detail I am going to be able to add.

Now, armed with a massive greyscale scan, a new Photoshop canvas of 6000 x 10000 pixels is created. I should mention that when working at this resolution you very quickly start creating really fat Photoshop files! The final tops out at around 900MB so I would only suggest you do this sort of crazy thing if your machine has enough oomph to handle it (**Fig.04**).

5: We start the painting process off by centring and aligning the sketch. A colour selection helps me delete the white from the scan so I am left with a layer of just black pencil. The foreground and background of the pencil layer are separated with the background blurred slightly to keep the focus on the foreground. Even in this early stage I had added in a background texture and started to play around with what the final colour scheme would be. I generally have a firm idea of colours and layout before getting into the design, but I try a different style/method for each of these monthly challenges. This one could be called, "Find a spare moment, use a lot of layers and just wing it!" (**Fig.05**)

6: I used only two brushes from start to finish, the first being a plain Hard Round with pressure sizing and an Opacity of 100% and varying Flow. The other is a long-used familiar brush that replicates thick acrylic on a rough brush – pen tilt direction is used for the rotation of this brush. I find it gives a much needed natural contrast to the look of the Hard Round. Once I am finished blocking in the major areas (vase, bulls, fluid etc.), the alpha from each will be used as a mask on a Layer Group.

With the masked Layer Groups made and labelled I can go crazy with the painting in each of them without fear of ruining a nice, clean edge. It is a lazy but effective way of staying within the lines.

A few highlights are added to the background but we will leave most of the details until the end (**Fig.06**).



Fig.10

Sort out the background, add some drips and tiny details.



Fig.09

New background colour....

7: Hiding some of the earlier workings we set off creating the shadow and highlight layers using Layer Modes Overlay, Soft light and Multiply (**Fig.07**).

8: Does anyone else think that this is becoming a bit of a Greek vase? I cannot say that I have heard of Greek China but it is too late to turn back now! By this point we still have all the main parts on separate layers, or groups, to allow for easy re-colouring of certain elements. The shadow was cleaned up a bit to make it fall more naturally on the background objects. The shadow and highlight layers get to work on the vase design adding depth (**Fig.08**).

9: The background colour scheme was inverted and although it lost a bit of contrast with the vase it suited the style a lot more. Partly due to the layer masking the image was getting a very clean look to it, so it was time to roughen up the colours and add in some flaws to make it more natural. A quick way to do this is to dive into your texture files and pull out a few favourites. An Overlay or Multiply layer with low opacity should instantly give the image some real world punch!

As I already had a hi-res background texture as the base, it was duplicated as an Overlay over the entire image (**Fig.09**).

10: The background had been ignored long enough so a bit of depth was added. Once I am happy enough with the overall colour scheme and layout we flatten our Photoshop file for the final details with our hard brush. Little bits of hair get added to the outline of the bull; water drips are added and a bit of manual dodge and burn for the shadow and highlight areas.

This is the version I will send off to the printers, though I wanted a little bit more colour for the forum version (**Fig.10**).

11: The final Color Adjustment layer is added to boost the light source and the border with just a bit of fluid spilling over the edge. And we're done – time to post it online!

I now wait patiently for my 120mm long print to arrive from the printers. I will have to post a photo of the final outcome on the forums once it arrives.

Thoughts for next time: make more notes and export more images as you go along. These things are really hard to write after the fact!

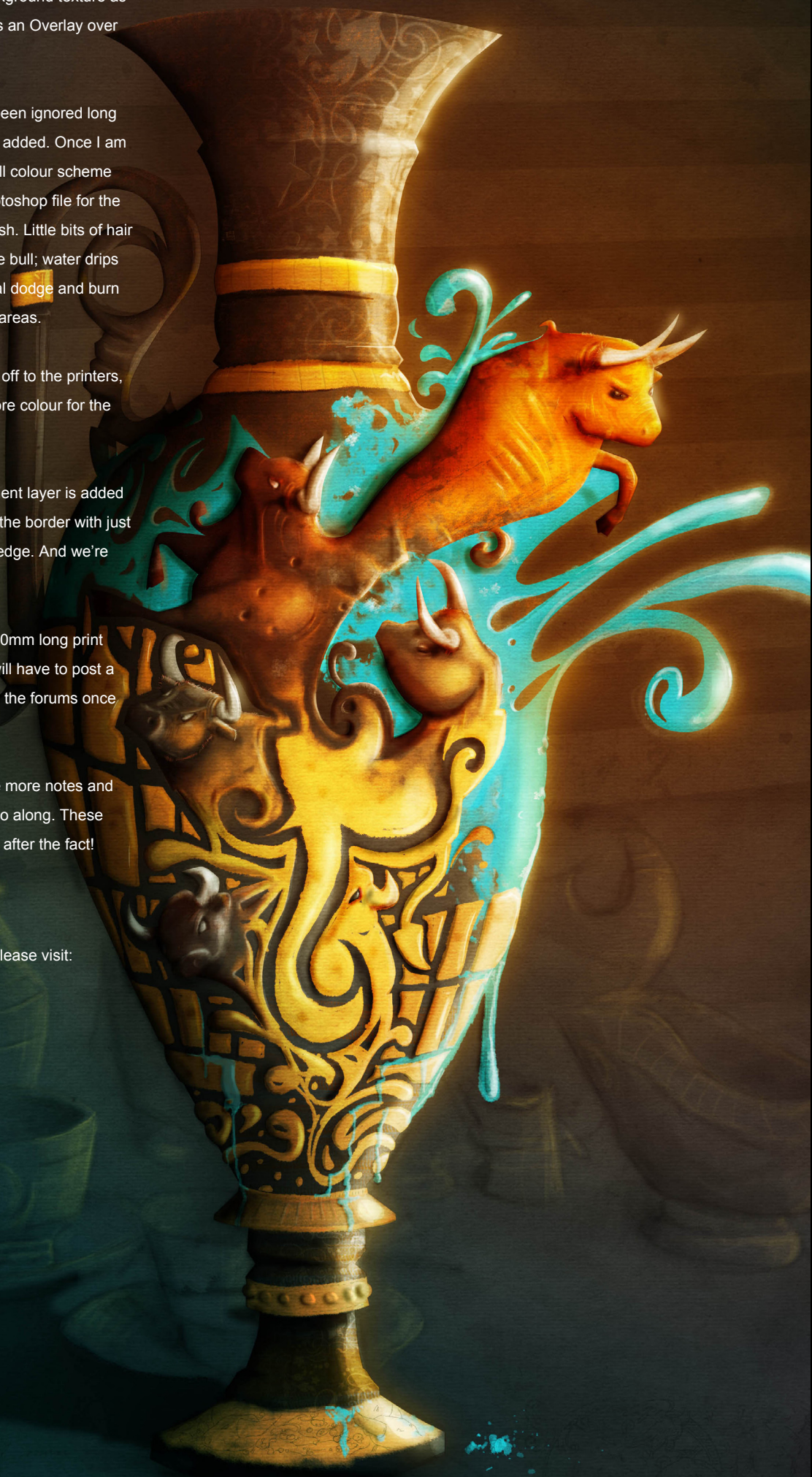
JASON BOWMAN

For more work by this artist please visit:

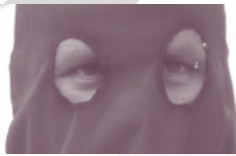
www.freakdesign.com.au

Or contact them at:

freakdesign@gmail.com



Final tweaks. I think we are done!



2ND - JANDS KISS

What is a bull to do in a china shop? Rampage and break pots, plates and vases – and the owner's heart along with them? Or can it sit down next to a table, drink a cup of tea and daydream.... about rampage and destruction, of course! I thought the latter may be the one closer to the truth, at least as far as domesticated cattle are concerned.

SKETCHING

I began by making some quick sketches in my sketchbook with a conventional pencil, focusing first on the bull's head and then expanding the posture and position. My original plan also involved a small fellow to be in contrast with the main character. The bull's anatomy is really a bluff – the humanoid body may seem a bit strange but it was better for this pose (**Fig.01**).

VALUES

After scanning, I started the painting process in ArtRage2 by setting the values. I used my sketch as a top layer and below this layer I filled in a mid grey using the Paint Roller tool and a

stencil of my own making. In ArtRage2 there are no custom brushes but there are stencils that work as an alpha channel, so you can define a greyscale image as a stencil and paint it over to add extra textures to your painting. After creating the background, I started to block

my figures and the environment with large brushstrokes on a separate layer (**Fig.02**). After this, I cleaned up my shapes with the eraser and started to refine my content, adding light and shadowed areas using a thin Paint Roller (**Fig.03**).

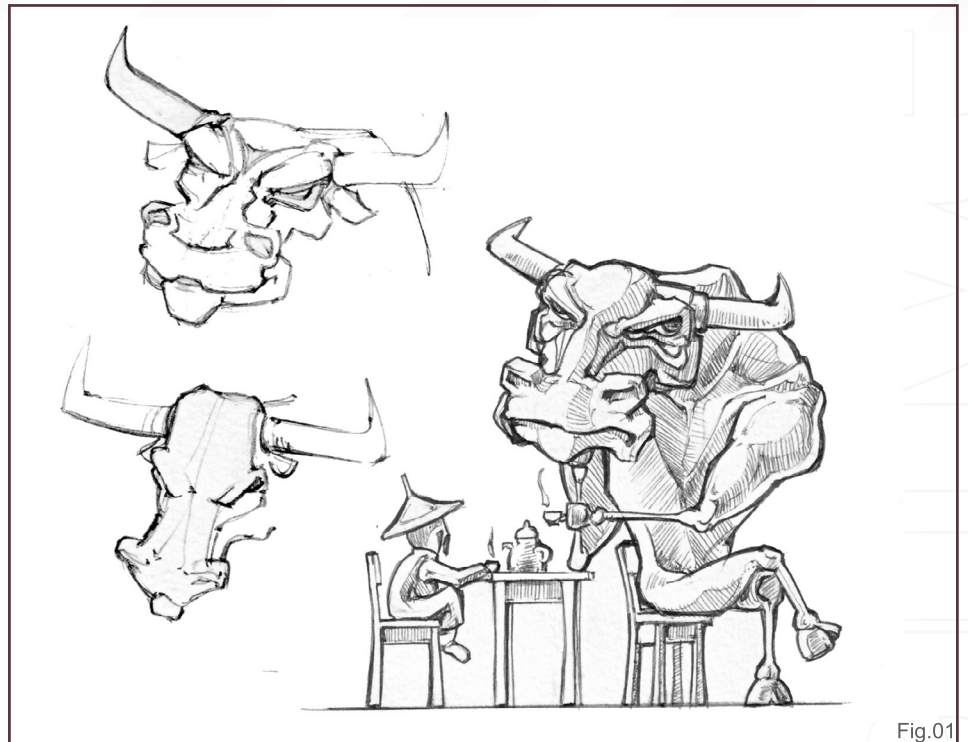


Fig.01



Fig.02



Fig.03



Fig.04

COLOURING

I was a little hesitant about the colouring so I tried several palettes before reaching my final decision. I added a new layer for the colour background and I started to block with large chalk strokes, and at this point I decided to drop the greyscale background without interacting with the coloured layer (Fig.04). To colour the figures and their environment, I worked on a separate layer using Paint Roller and Chalk tools and switched the layer mode to Overlay (Fig.05). As the next step, I placed some vases behind the figures, using stencils. I developed these objects just enough to add something interesting without competing with the foreground. I repeated background colours to give a solid character to my work – for the details I used the Pencil tool (Fig.06).

FINISHING

I made this picture when I could spare some time, and it happened that I had a few days' break in the course of its creation. When reopening my painting after this break, I was not so satisfied with my original idea, so I changed my mind and replaced the small fellow from my original concept with a vase on the left, and cropped the image to give more of a focus to the silhouette of the bull. Finally, I drew a speech bubble and placed some broken pictograms inside (vertical due to the Chinese reading rule, from up to down).



Fig.05



Fig.06

JÁNOS KISS

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Kiss 070300

07
03
08



1ST – DAVE NEALE

Another fun animal challenge – I've done a few now and enjoy every one! For the "Bull in a China Shop" I knew I wanted a simple character. I had an urban vinyl type design in mind, so I put pen (of the Wacom kind) to paper (of the Photoshop kind) and came up with a pompous-looking bull. From here on in the bull determined the feel of the piece. I decided he'd look fun just browsing the cabinets in a china shop, so this was the concept I stuck with (**Fig.01**).

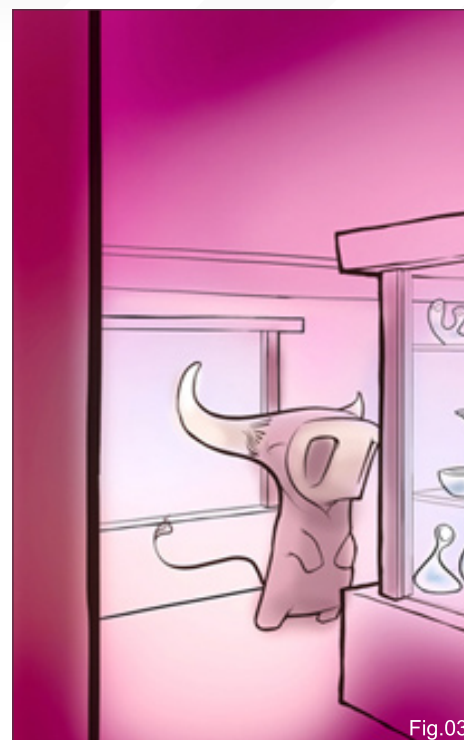
I planned out my composition and inked the lines in Photoshop. I plumped for a tall portrait canvas with cabinets enclosing the bull, to try and convey the limited space and claustrophobia of your average cramped china shop (**Fig.02**).

Composition and lines all sorted, I then got to planning my colours... I'm usually pretty random in my colour choices and often just play about with vague ideas and combinations until I'm happy with something. For this image I went for pinks and purples – for no immediately obvious reason, it was just the mood I was in (**Fig.03**).

I should probably mention that the inking was on one layer, with a separate layer for the china

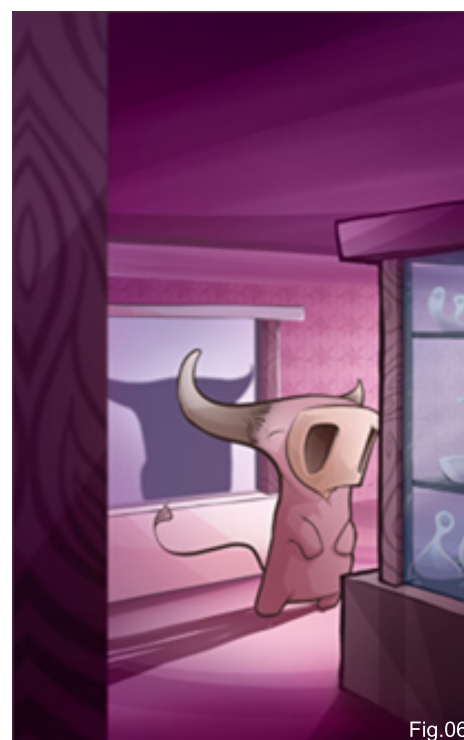


in the cabinet (as I knew that would be behind the glass). The initial colour lay down was on one layer, but at this point I used the Lasso tool to separate all the different elements (wood, bull, wall, ceiling etc.) into different layers. This meant that I could easily block in the areas with a unified colour and paint into the layers quickly (after locking them, so I wouldn't paint over the edges).



Here I've isolated the bull layer, applied some basic gradients and then applied a shadow with the lasso tool on a new layer set to multiply (**Fig.04**).

I then continued the same process on the other areas, as well as starting to apply colour to the lines (the way I tend to do this is to lock the layer with the icon at the top of the layers



palette in Photoshop and then just paint inside the lines). Here I also made a new layer for the foreground cabinet side, applied the gradients and shadows as with other objects, merged the layers and then applied a gaussian blur, which I used to imply depth. For the glass what I tend to do is make a new layer of flat colour (a dark blue in this case), and then make the layer more opaque in the layers palette and apply highlights with a lighter blue (**Fig.05**).

Finally, I finished all the areas off using the same process described above. I added some wallpaper by drawing a flower pattern, duplicating it until I had a large enough area to colour the wall, and then using the Transform tool put it into place at the correct perspective. The last thing I did was to create a new layer above everything, set to multiply, and added a shadow around the edges so as to place the focus on the central character.

DAVE NEALE

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This month, Bente Schlick shares with us her very own tips and experiences with painting realistic hands... Enjoy!

Painting Hands

Painting Hands

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION TO PAINTING REALISTIC HANDS

The hand is one of the most difficult parts of the body to paint because it is a very complex shape, and with its multiple possibilities of movement and many joints you are forced to make endless close examinations to understand how it behaves and looks under different circumstances (be it from memory or based on models, etc.). Although our eyes can immediately recognise a mistake in a drawing, it can sometimes be hard for the viewer to tell exactly what's wrong with the drawing... So, in this tutorial, I will try to give some tips (with the help of an example) and hope that they will make it easier for you to draw hands for yourself in your very own works of art!

To understand the basic set-up of the hand, it is really important to examine it first. As most of us own two of these wonderful human artefacts, this should not be a big problem, really. I know that some of you would prefer to start drawing immediately, but I highly recommend that you

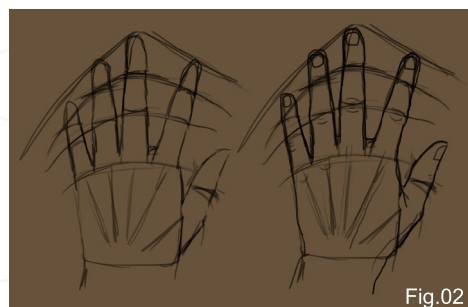


Fig.02

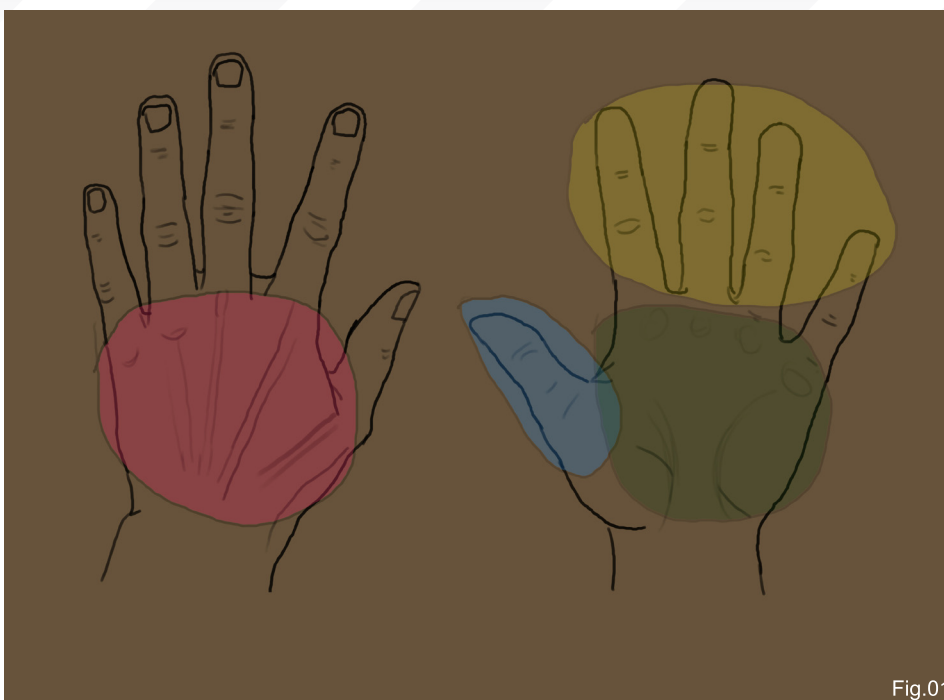


Fig.01

take a closer look at the construction of hands in general, before starting to draw blindly, as you can avoid making little mistakes right from the very beginning by doing so. Also keep in mind that no hand is like another! There are long and delicate hands, athletic hands, broad hands, compact and slender hands... There are hands that look like their owner has worked a lot with them, or hands that look as if they were made of porcelain; old hands and young hands;

lined or bony hands. The hand even sometimes betrays a person's character and sensitivity due to its special morphology and expressiveness. So let's simply focus on the basic set-up of the hand first of all.

BASIC ELEMENTS

Basically, we can divide the hand into 3 basic elements: the fingers, the thumb and the palm (or rather the back of the hand) (Fig.01).

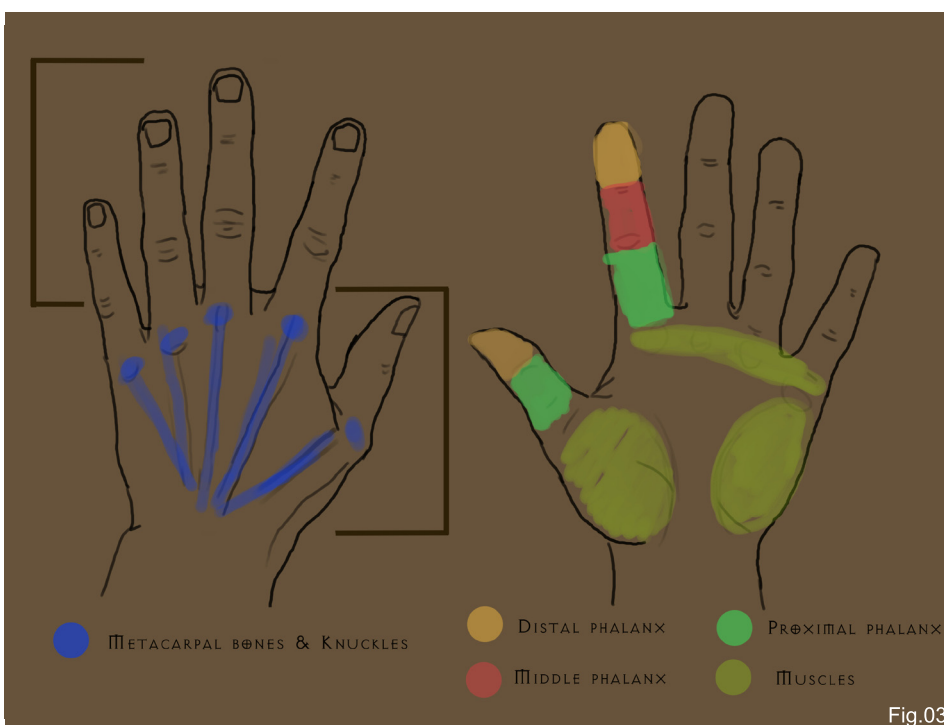


Fig.03

The longest finger is the middle finger, while the index finger and the ring finger have almost the same length. The thumb and the little finger are the smallest ones. If you check the length of the fingers and compare them to the length of the palm, you will recognise that they are almost the same size.

Now compare the length of your face with the length of your hand. You will see that your hand is almost as long as your face (or just a bit shorter, or longer). It is best to try this in profile. This is the best way to check the harmony between your figure and the size of your hand.

The thumb is always situated markedly below the other fingers. I always visualise the palm as a rectangle where the thumb is just attached to its side. If you start with geometrical forms it will be a lot easier to get the proportions right (Fig.02).

The fingers are composed of three segments: the proximal phalanx which is connected to the palm/back of the hand, the middle phalanx, and the distal phalanx with the finger nails. The thumb has just two phalanxes. Keep all this in mind while sketching, otherwise your fingers will look like sausages! The back of the hand is arched slightly outwards, while the palm arches inwards (Fig.03).



Fig.07

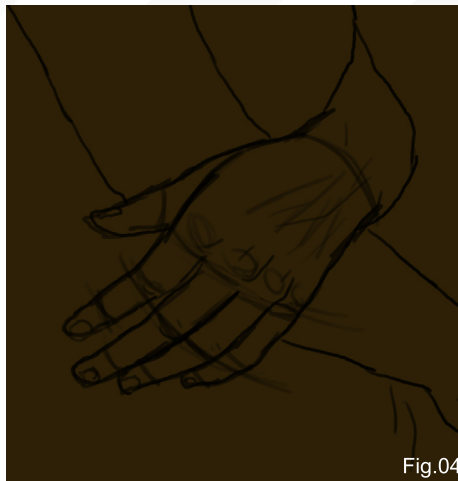


Fig.04



Fig.05



Fig.06

The back of the hand also comprises the knuckles, which can be more or less distinct depending on the individual hand. They are located precisely at the end of the five fan-like metacarpals. Three muscles stand out from the palm of the hand: one at the side of the hand, one at the fingers' roots, and one at the thumb.

PAINTING EXAMPLE

I will now try to show you an example, using a painting of mine called "Secret Garden". During the whole painting process I will keep the left

hand of the figure on a separate layer so I can isolate it from the rest of the picture if I need to, and also so that I do not brush over the rest of the painting.

The beginning of the painting process always starts with a sketch, which I apply according to the process described previously. The first sketch is a development from many previous sketches that I have done in order to work out the structure of the hand in such a position (Fig.04).



Fig.08

In the second step I left out the horizontal lines in order to achieve a clear outline of my drawing. As I still have my model as a reference image it is not necessary to get into too much detail here (Fig.05).

It's absolutely essential to use good references if you want to draw photorealistic hands. The best way is to use your own photos, a model, or your mirror (although I can find it a bit annoying having to turn to the mirror every other second to see how something looks, interrupting the painting process!).

It is important that you only draw what you *see* and not what you *think* you see. It is something my primary school teacher always told me which has helped me ever since.

I chose a very naturalistic colour scheme, such as, for example, Bougereau did. In this painting I will limit myself to this specific scheme. You can deduce a lot from this for other colour schemes, for example that the skin tone is



Fig.10



Fig.09

darker (dark brown and red in my painting) in some parts of the hand than in the rest, like on the fingertips and around the knuckles, or in the spaces between the fingers. On the whole, the skin of the hand is thinner and more translucent than on some other parts of the human body, so any veins and vessels, knuckles and bones shine through the tissue more easily (Fig.06).

So now I can start colouring the hand, layer by layer, always using one brush for painting and another for smudging (Fig.07).

These are the only two brushes that I use for the whole painting, except for the "sparkle brushes" that I'll mention later on.



Fig.11

Using the defined hand colours (see Fig.06), we start by laying down the colours with the paintbrush. We then need to go over the painted area with the smudge brush (**Fig.08**), smudging the colours very softly together with a very small brush. Remember you want to be smudging the brush strokes into each other, and not parallel to each other (**Fig.09**).

OK, so the colours in our first image all look a bit transparent, don't they? Well here's a very



Fig.12



Fig.13

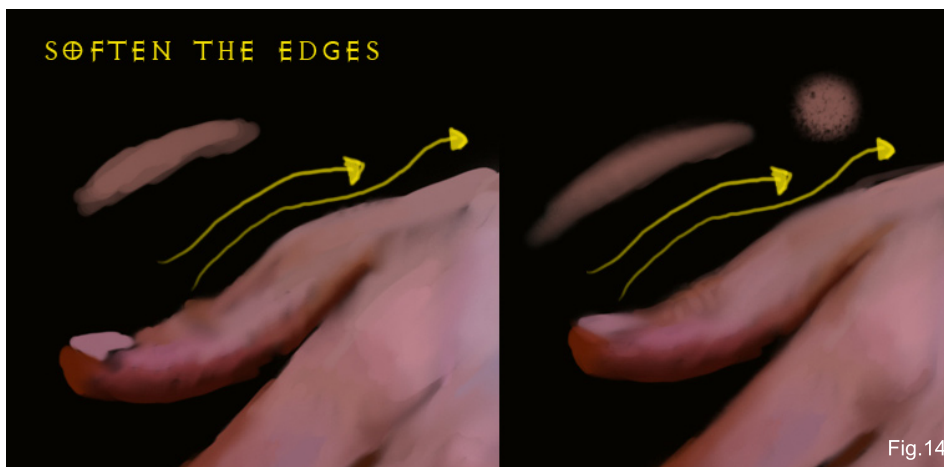


Fig.14

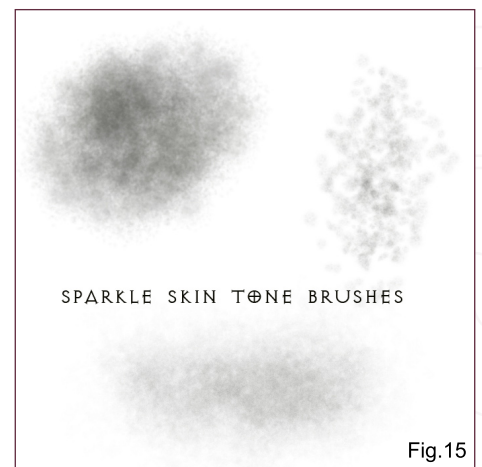


Fig.15



Fig.16

simple trick! Duplicate the layer on which you painted the first coating. The colours will be shielded automatically (**Fig.10** and **Fig.11**). Try it for yourself! You have to decide for yourself if it's the effect you want to achieve, or not. If you don't like it, simply go on and duplicate the layer again.

We should now have a very good base to go on and refine the hand with. So we need to start the whole procedure again, using the very same colours as before: painting and smudging, painting and smudging. In step 4 (**Fig.12**), I started to use a lot more colours, like a light rose and a light blue for the back of the hand, giving the hand a more translucent look and making the knuckles and veins more visible (if you have no idea where the veins are then just take a look at your own hand for quick reference!).

Remember to paint carefully, using a small brush and always only smudging small parts of the hand. Try not to press too hard with the

tablet and be sure to make use of the ability of your brush to react with your pen pressure.

In the fifth step (**Fig.13**), we need to try and make everything look softer. So the first thing we'll do is to soften the edges of the hand with the smudge brush (**Fig.14**). Now, because that alone won't do, we will also use some "sparkled brushes" here (**Fig.15**). Pick the colour of the area that you want to look softer, for example the fingers, and brush over them (**Fig.16**). Don't forget to use a single layer for this brush so you can simply erase any small dots that go over the side of the finger. And guess what we're going to do after using the sparkled brush? That's right: we're going to do some more smudging! But not too much this time; just do it in places where the "sparkles" are much too visible. Leave the rest as it is, because it'll give the hand some characteristics.

Now just try this same step on other parts of the hand. Generally, I would give the advice that,

if you think something looks too stiff and hard, always use a sparkled brush instead of a normal brush for brushing over the area. This will make your painting look much more natural!

So, the fifth step looks already very realistic, doesn't it? But we can do even better! In the last step (**Fig.17**) I tried to make it much softer. I tried to unite the colours, but not simply by smudging them because there's a point where you won't be able to make something look more realistic just by smudging it. So we need our sparkle brushes again...

Now, pick a colour and brush over the line of colour A and B. After that, do the same with colour B (**Fig.18**). You'll see how softly they

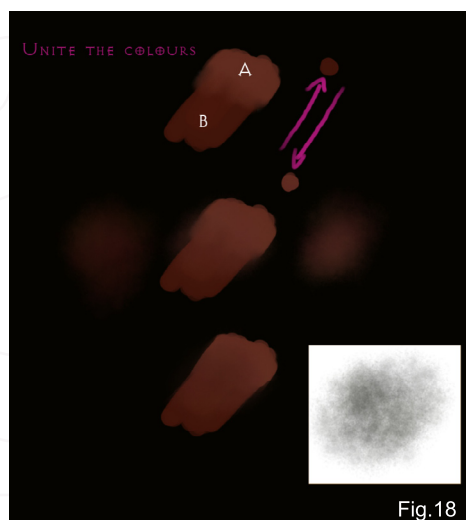


Fig.18

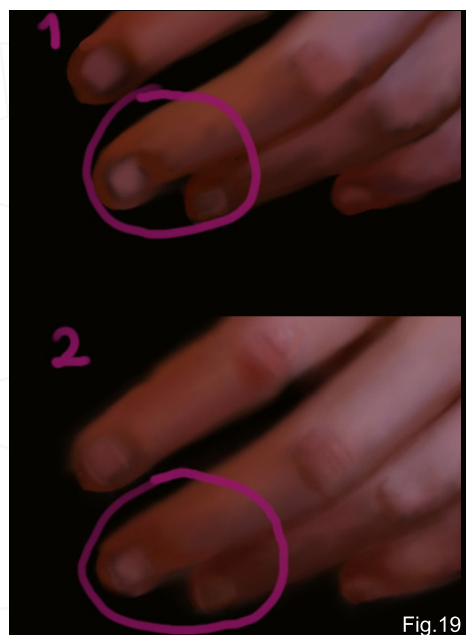


Fig.19

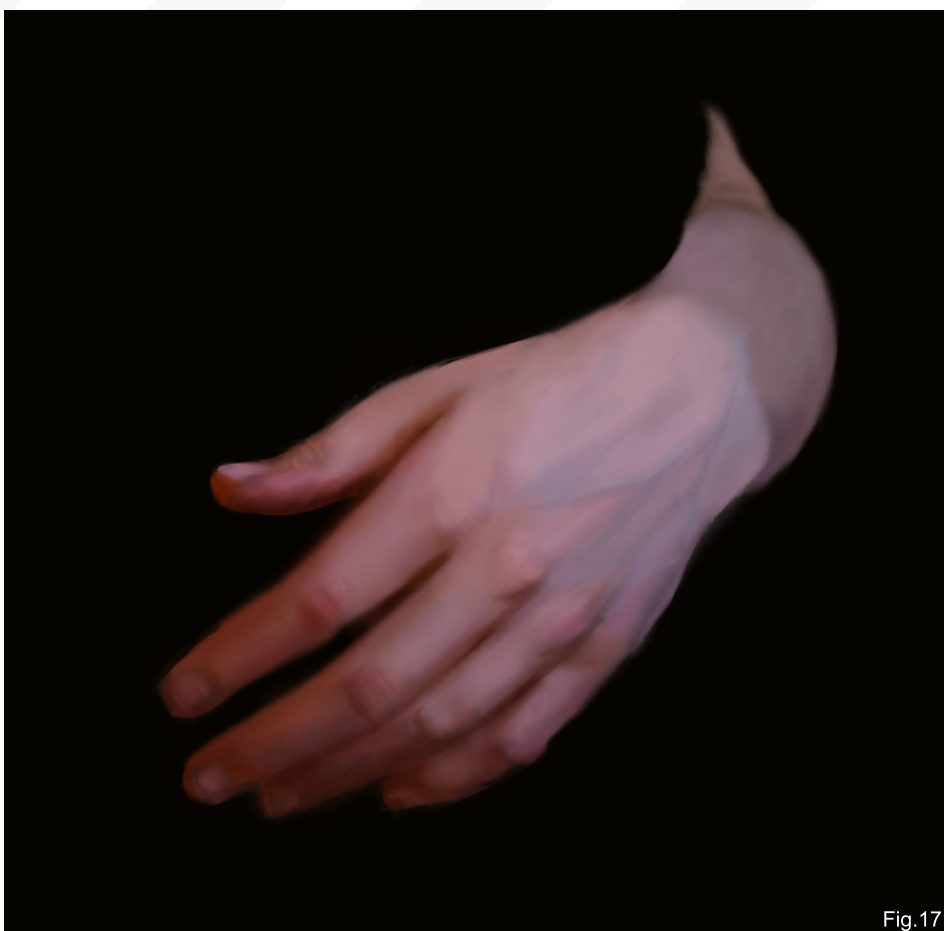


Fig.17

unite and you'll get a new colour mixed from A and B (**Fig.19**).

You'll have to do that several times until you achieve an effect like what is shown in Fig.19. In the end, it may even be wise to imply some highlights on the nails, the knuckles and/or on the veins.

CONCLUSION

This hand looks better in the complete painting, of course (**Fig.20**). For realistic paintings it is not always important to paint every little detail of something; you can rather leave out some things or smudge them. Our brain is trained in a way that it automatically adds things to a picture that are supposed to be there but need not to be painted (which is often the case when you have dark areas in the hair, for example, where you do not need to draw every single strand of hair because the viewer will not notice it). Most of the time it looks much more realistic if you leave things out and do not draw the picture to death,

which can often be caused by too many details (like painting every single crinkle or a perfect finger nail!).

To sum up, I just want to say a few words to all those people who think they will never be able to draw realistic hands. As I said before, thorough study is extremely important. And I really mean this! If someone tells me they will never be able to draw realistic hands then I tell them that they should stop thinking and talking and just start studying! If you are an artist and you love drawing, you should not need a bigger incitement than the fact that you cannot draw something like you wish you could. During your life as an artist you make different developments, you get better and you make new experiences. Would it not be the worst thing if you looked back and recognised that you never tried drawing certain things because you thought you never could? Perhaps you'll need a lot of time, but some day you will be able to draw what you wanted to and you will

be satisfied. I did not wake up one day and find I could suddenly draw perfect, realistic hands (aside from this, hands will never actually look "perfect"!), and no, I would not be able to draw photorealistic hands just from my memory.

And then I ask myself, why do I have two hands if I never take a closer look at them? They are there, just in front of you – you use them every day and they are simply waiting for you to draw them!

BENTE SCHLICK

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Fig.20

B. Schlick



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Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. We've asked two artists this month to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, Mike Corriero and Robin Olausson, tackle the topic:

**THE CITY CENTRE
LOOKED LIKE A
JEWEL AMONGST THE
SURROUNDINGS**

MIKE CORRIERO

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

The key points behind successful speed paintings are textures, unique patterns, shapes, the suggestion of forms, without too much detail, and a good sense of light and direction. If you're going to try to communicate an image without rendering out forms in detail, the use of custom brushes and textures will help you to sell the conceptual idea of an object. You need to captivate the viewer with interesting details that don't have to be hand-painted one by one. These details don't have to be your conventional method of thinking and can quite often be more abstract and indicate intricate details through the brush strokes.

BASE LAYER

After laying down a quick base colour with the paint bucket tool, I decided to throw down some quick suggestions of shapes with a simple, square brush. I've used the brush tip shape



Fig.02

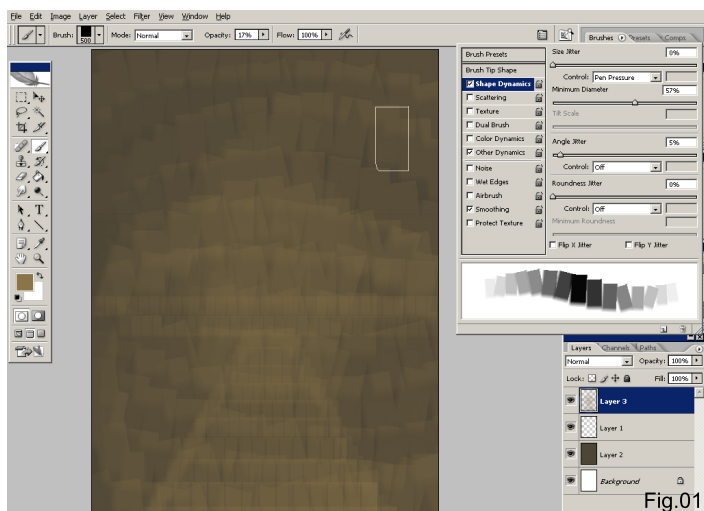


Fig.01

and dynamics option to adjust the brush a bit, also giving the brush some spacing so the quick strokes will create a bit of a pattern. At this point, although I'm working with a topic, I'm not quite sure what's going to come out of this yet so I'm just playing with random abstract strokes (Fig.01).

CHOOSING THE FOCAL POINT

I've quickly chosen where I want the focal point to be and, in keeping with the same square brush, I'm just laying down a quick base of lines and shapes for what will be a type of shrine. The steps, the square tile patterned lines for the wall, and the arch above, all help to push the viewer towards this area – the hot spot of the painting. A quick splash of a bright value and a saturated gold instantly draws your attention to this spot. I'm going to stick with the square brush throughout the entire painting, but

I'll be switching the tip shape and adding dual brush and textures to it for a gritty appearance later on. The textures will give the painting a more detailed look without any real extra effort or work (Fig.02).

QUICK LIGHTING AND FORMS

With darker and lighter values of the same colour tones, I'm starting to define the arch with some added strokes of detail, although still very quick and rough. I've also reinforced the steps and angled walls with stronger and more saturated hues, once again drawing your attention to the main focal position. Without too much thought the design is taking on some

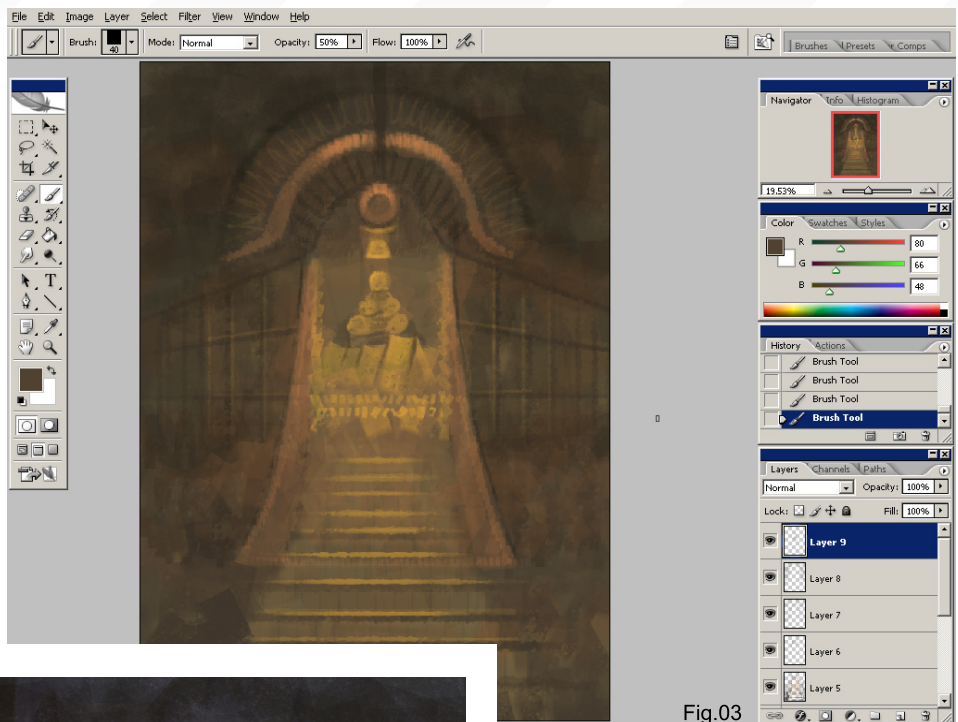


Fig.03

Asian architectural and object influences, so the jewel of this painting will be a golden statue; something similar to a Buddhist figure but it will be left very rough and allow the viewer to really interpret what it is they are looking at (Fig.03).

COOL SHADOWS AND SHINING THROUGH

Duplicating the layer allows me to make a quick adjustment to the colour of the overall image. An Auto Levels adjustment changes the colour scheme to blues and purples, which is perfect to offset the warm golden hues radiating from the jewel of the city. In lowering the opacity of that level a bit, I decided to go in and erase out the areas where the focal point is situated, letting the original colours shine through. At this point I can start to throw in some refined details and bright hot spots on the statue, and the arch above. In order to have the square brush follow the form of the arch I just set the brush shape dynamics to initial direction (Fig.04).

ROWS OF BEAMS. BRICKS AND RAILS

Once again, just by adjusting the brush options of the square brush, I've slimmed down the shape, adding more spacing with some opacity



Fig.04

and flow jitter, and have begun suggesting some different materials. The size, shape and angles alone will determine what they are meant to portray. In this case, I'm using vertical lines to just give the steps some texture while also providing the base of the railings. Above the shrine and the arch much larger and thicker squares give off a rough impression of bricks. The reason this square brush was chosen for the topic is because it can be adjusted in so many ways and used to show something of structure, while also allowing me to paint highlights and shadows on a lower opacity and pen pressure setting (**Fig.05**).

ADJUSTING THE LEVELS

A quick adjustment to the levels brings the main attraction forward. This levels adjustment darkens the shadows and brightens the highlights, whilst also increasing the saturation. So now the cooler shadows fall back and the jewel really begins to pop out and give off the golden vibe I'm looking for (**Fig.06**).

MAJORITY OF DETAIL

The majority of suggestive detailing is going to be given to the focal point of the image. Some textures have been added to the tiled walls



Fig.05

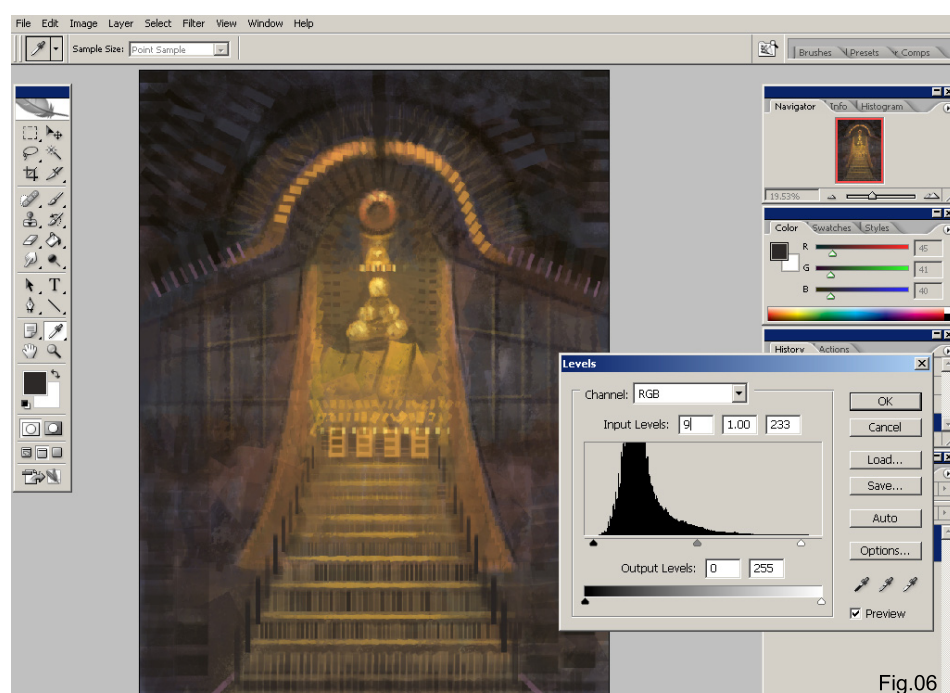
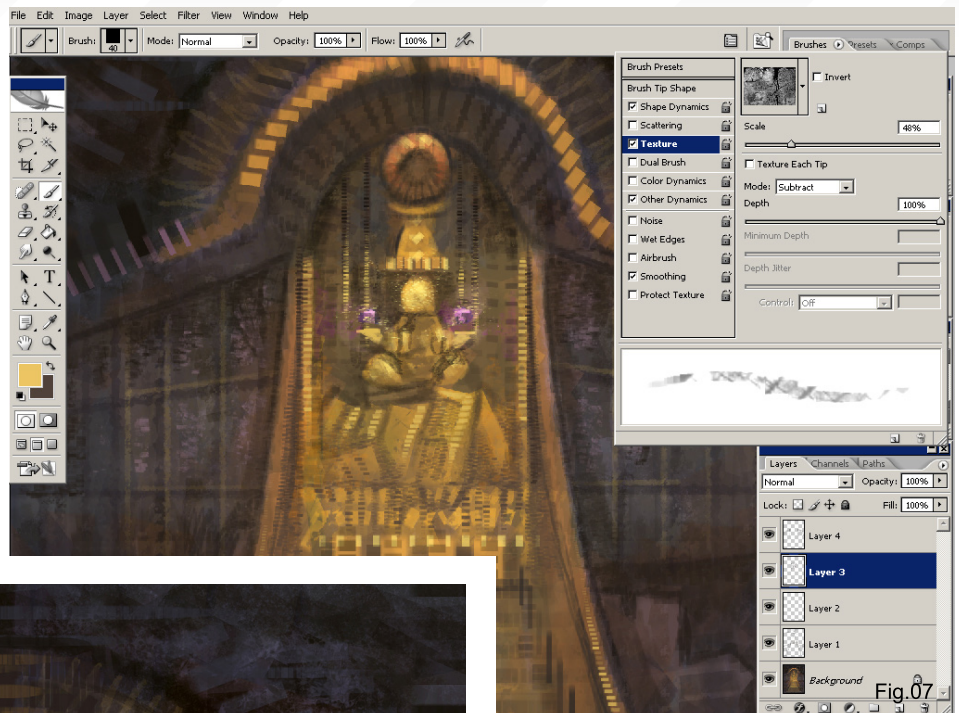


Fig.06

surrounding it, but I want to make sure that smaller and tighter shapes are located within this jewel. I've very lightly gone in and defined some of the shapes by shading around the highlights and suggesting that the statue is holding something of value. The bright violet really draws your attention in now and it makes you curious what this glowing object is. They could in fact be jewels, diamonds or perhaps something of a more ethereal nature. This is once again left up to the viewer to decide (**Fig.07**).

FINALISING WHAT IS IMPORTANT

Towards the final stages I've just made sure that the surrounding environment is in perfect contrast to the jewel, in both colour and detailing as well as design. The surrounding shapes are more haphazardly thrown together; they are more gritty and of less importance. It's indicated that there are forms of walls, bricks, tiles and random objects of unknown design. These remain in the darker and cooler toned values so that the main attraction comes forth without effort. Some detailing is made to the railings,



warmer red orange tones are added where light transitions might take place, and the structure of the stairs is reinforced.

Overall, the most important aspects of this painting are complete; there is enough texturing and detail to keep your interest and to describe what you're looking at, while still remaining rough and open to interpretation. And that's it! Just remember that the key to a focal point is through the contrast of values, saturation of hues and the direction of shapes (**Fig.08**).

MIKE CORRIERO

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ROBIN OLAUSSEN

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION:

Speed-painting, for me, is about capturing the most essential elements within an image in the least possible time, whilst still keeping as much detail as possible. Form, light, values, composition, contrast, colour, edge quality, and so on, are all really important elements in order to get the results you are looking for. I don't have any particular order in which I build up my images, since different methods work better for me with different types of images. Sometimes I go for textured work with a lot of custom brushes, and even stamps made out of photos, whereas other times I just go for simple custom brushes and standard ones to keep things more simple and practice pure painting speed.

BLOCKING-IN:

Since I was going to do a landscape type of image with a town, meaning lots of man-made objects, a good foundation of a perspective grid was really important. To get the imagination going I needed some kind of shapes going on and not just a simple white background with a stiff perspective grid, so I made a "stamp brush" of a texture and then used it as a custom brush to paint in some random background noise (**Fig.01**). While following my perspective

grid I distorted and added another stamp of an architectural structure to fit my perspective, and with a big brush I painted in some values to define more hints of structures and a ground plane (**Fig.02**).

The next few steps are about the same procedure, adding some stamps and more brush strokes to indicate form and value changes. Keep in mind your composition and contrast and don't go too dark or too bright with your values since we want to save this for later!

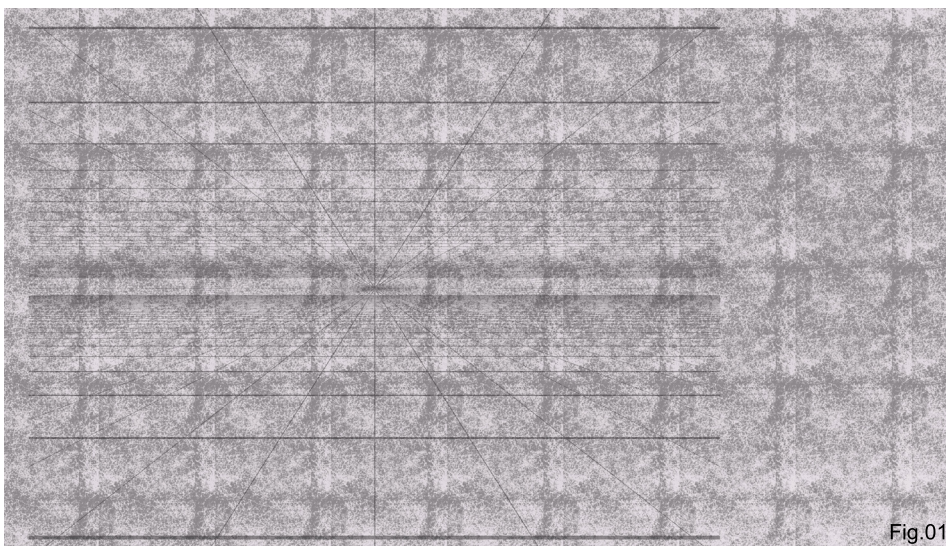


Fig.01

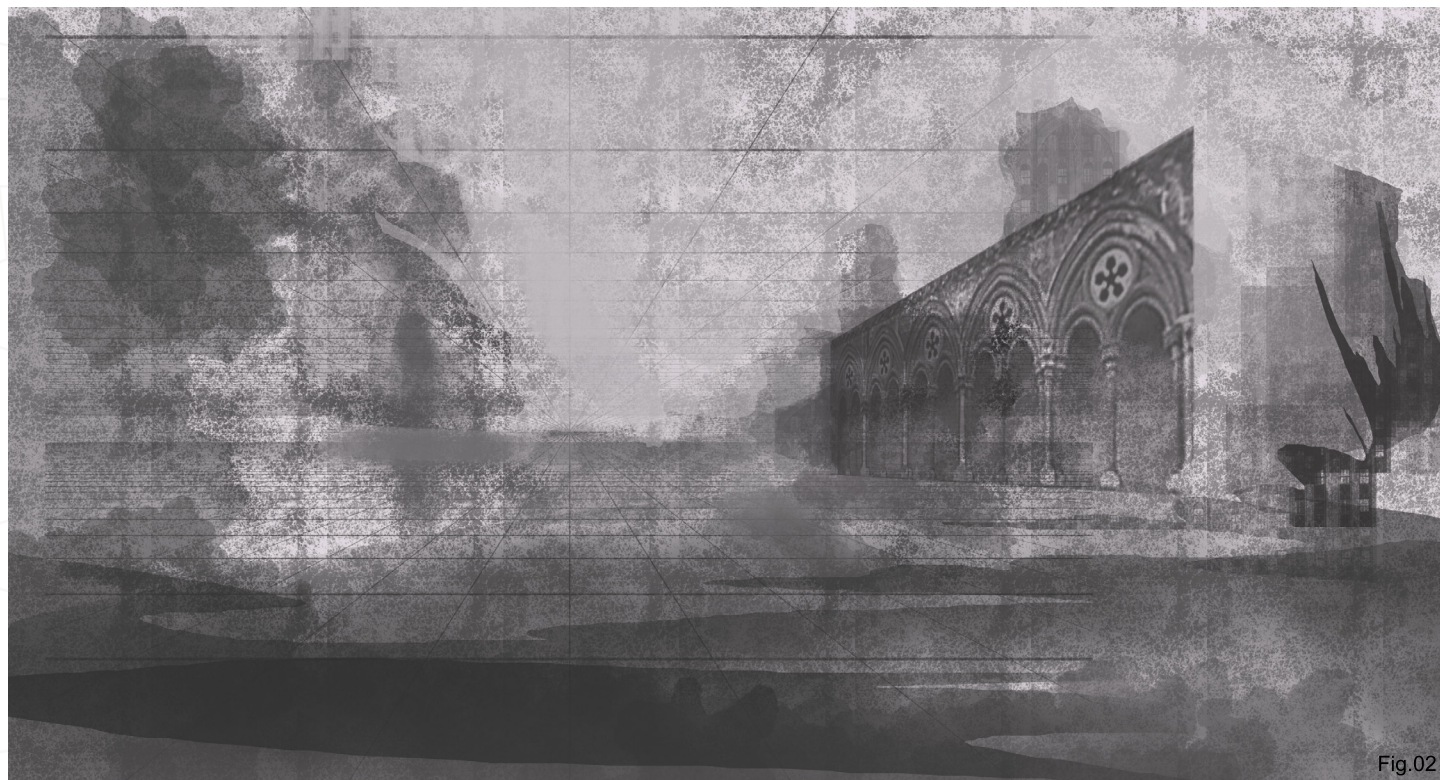


Fig.02

COLOURING:

I'm not too concerned with which colours I start out with, because if I don't like them I can always change them pretty easily if things are backed up or on different layers. It's pretty much all about having fun, and what can be more fun than playing around with lots of different colours? After all, isn't that what every child finds most enjoyable about painting?

When I first started to colour this piece I made some new layers and set the mode to either Multiply, Dodge, Screen, Overlay, etc. It really doesn't matter though, as long as you find a combination that feels good for you! After you get something you're happy with, it's time to get more serious! Think about what your light source is, where it's coming from and what temperature that light would have, and then counter the shadows with the opposite temperature.

ADDING DETAILS AND DEPTH:

With some customised edgy spacing brushes I tried to emulate the feeling of foliage. The important thing to remember here is to have

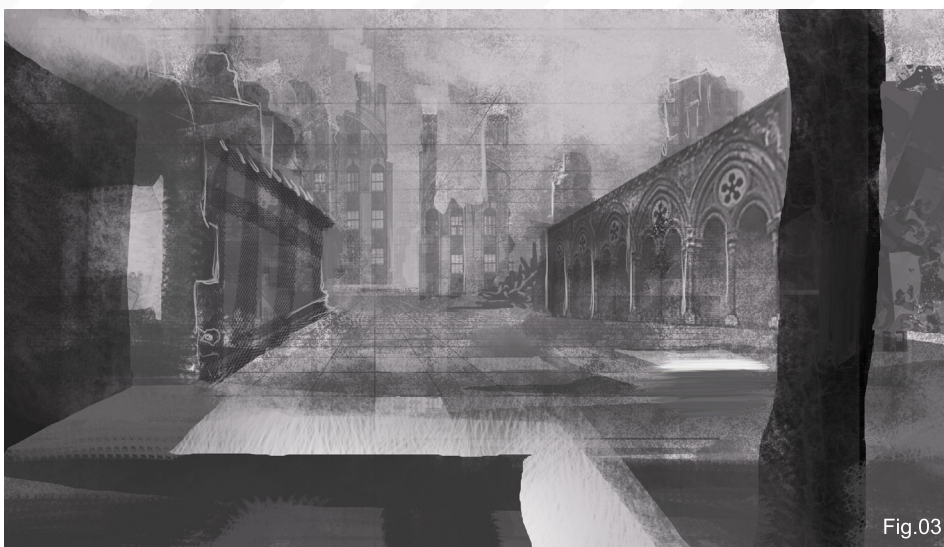


Fig.03



Fig.04

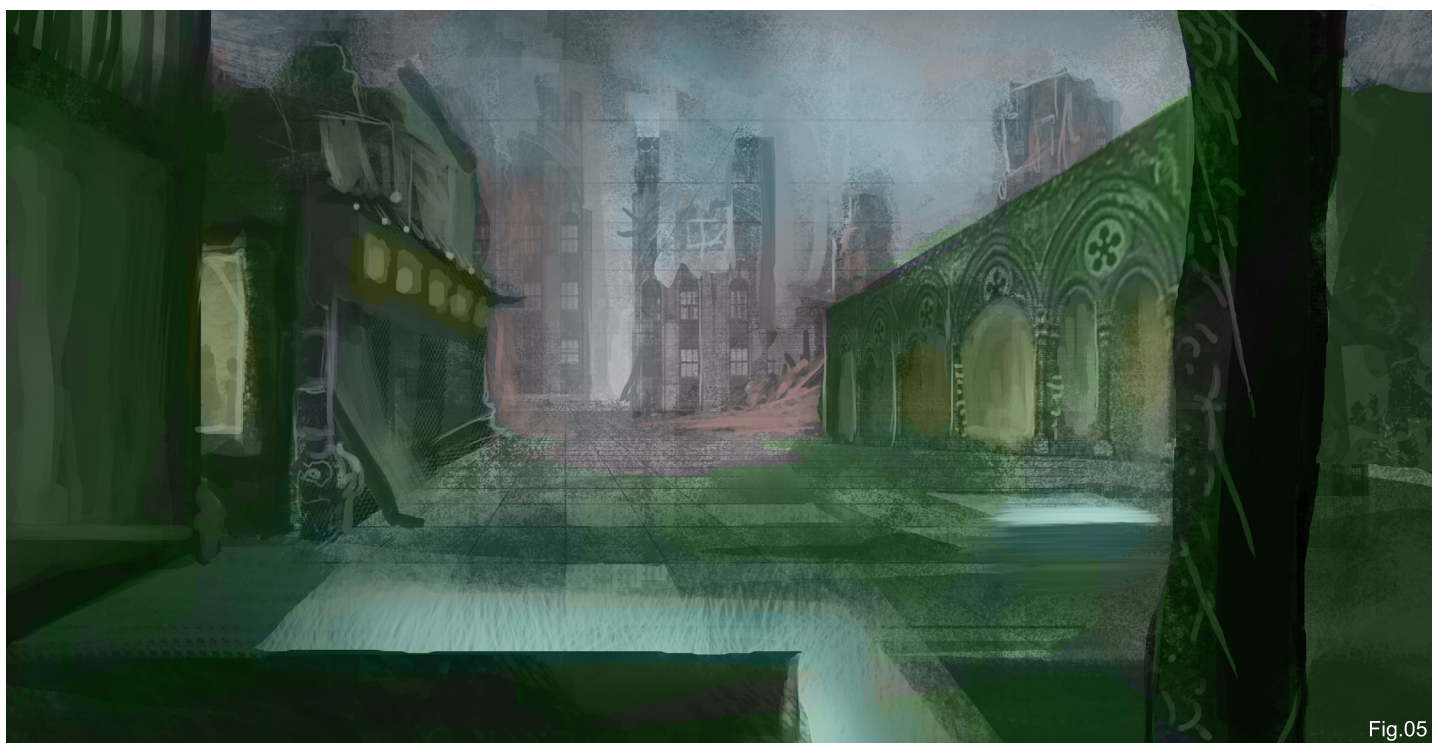


Fig.05

a nice sharp brush that produces crisp edges. After you get the basic silhouette done, it's time to add dimension to the objects, working from big brushes to smaller ones and adding a light/dark side to the objects. Another good way to get crisp edges is to use the Lasso tool to select an area and then, with a large brush, paint inside of it (**Fig.06** and **Fig.07**).

LEVELS AND HIGHLIGHTS

OK, so another fast way to paint in lighting is with the Dodge tool, although it's too often overused so be sure to use it wisely! Think of where your light source is coming from and what type of a surface the object you are dealing with has. Is your object wet, metallic, translucent? All of these different types of surfaces will make a difference in how the light reacts with the object. I personally felt that the image was a bit greyish or dusty, so to correct the contrast I used Ctrl + L to access the Levels. I darkened the entire image a bit and added more lighting to get the mood I was looking for. And that's it (**Fig.08** and **Fig.09**).

ROBIN OLAUSSON

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Or contact:

tv1000@spray.se

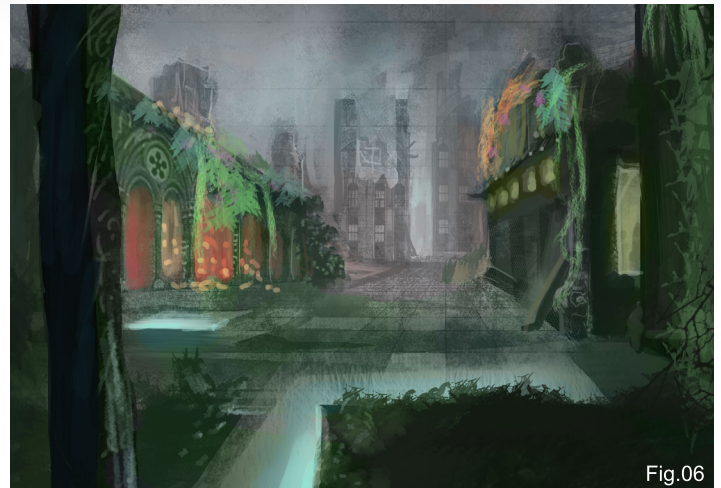


Fig.06

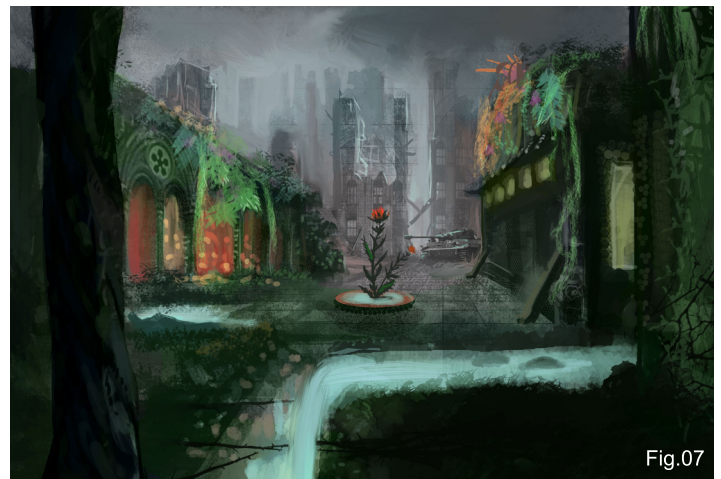


Fig.07



Fig.08

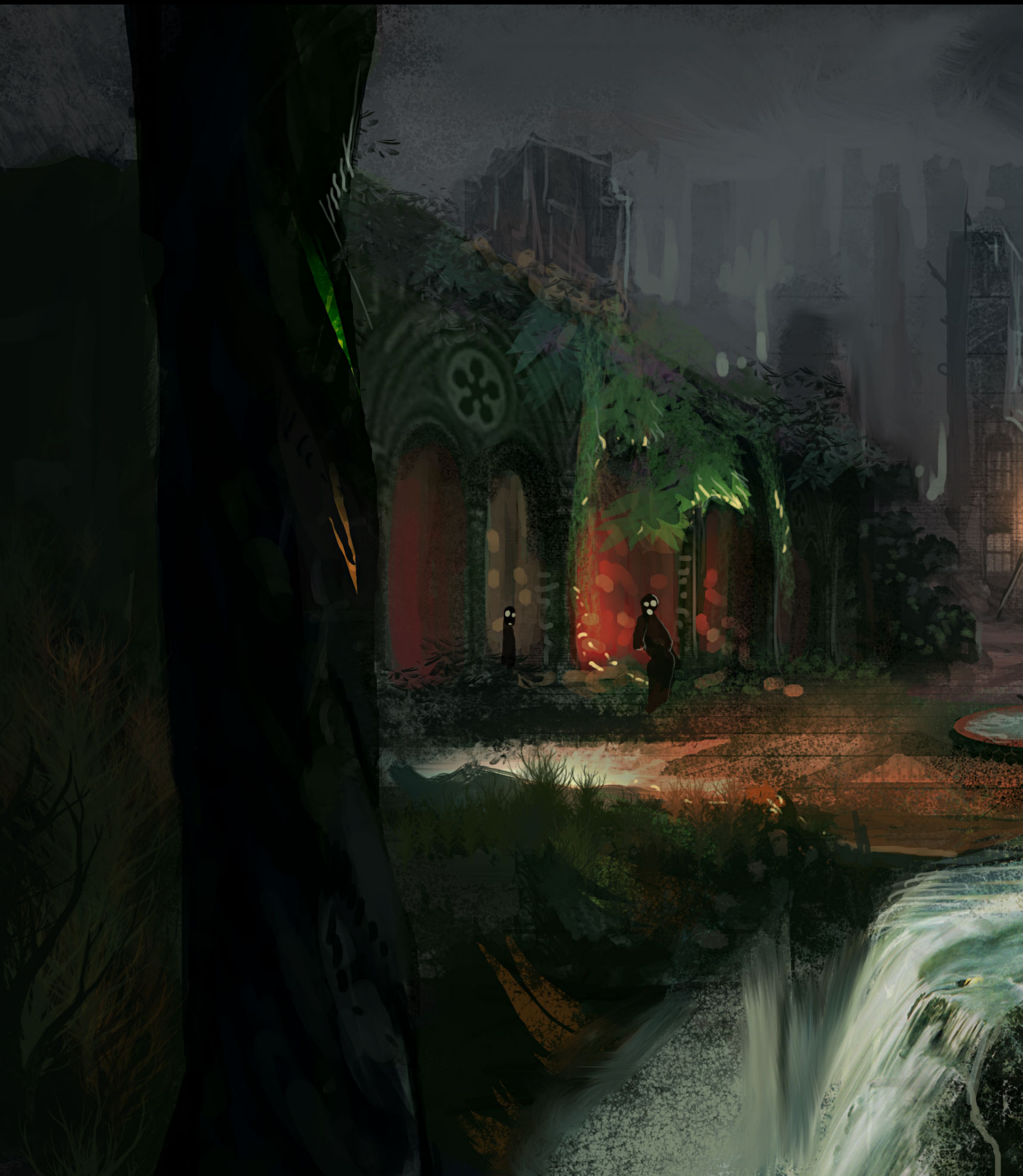
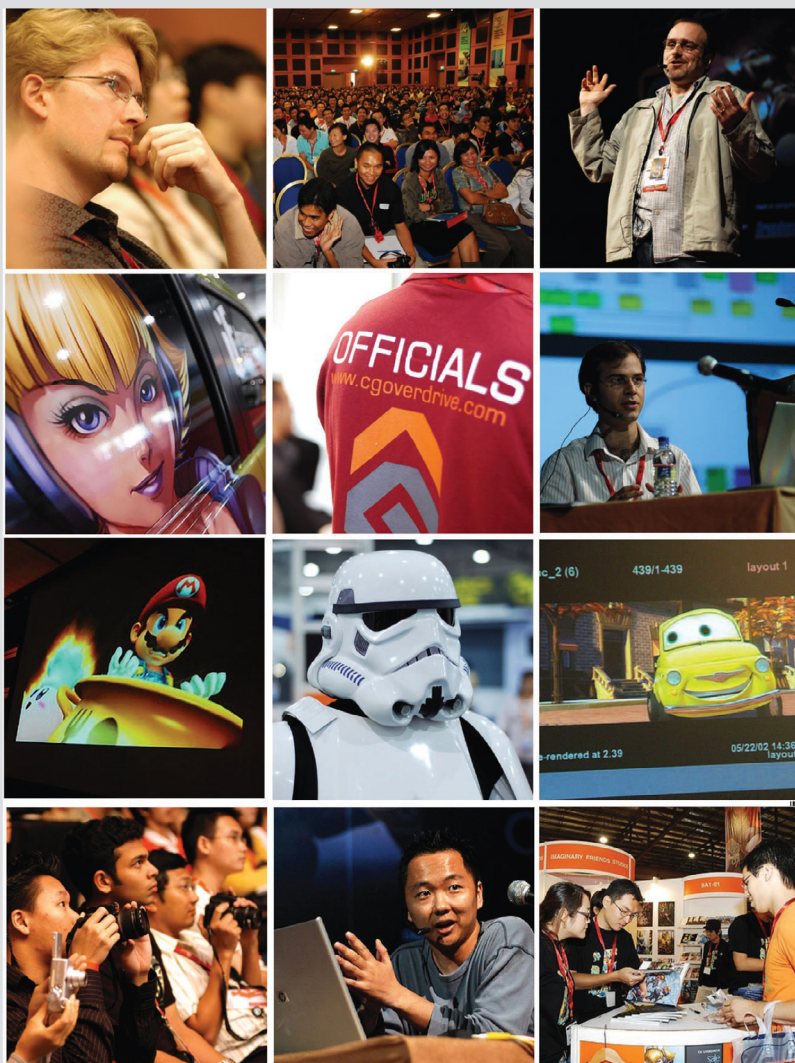




Fig.09



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"FIRE AND SMOKE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED PRETTY TOUGH ELEMENTS TO PAINT IF YOU'RE AIMING FOR REALISM IN YOUR WORK. IN MATTE PAINTING YOU HAVE THE OPTIONAL CHOICE TO FIND A STOCK THAT FITS YOUR NEEDS . OR USE A SMOKE/GAS SIMULATION SOFTWARE"

part 4: Fire and Smoke

This month's tutorial Tiberius Viris will tackle with some pyro effects to create fire and smoke.



matte painting fire and smoke

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

Greetings and welcome to the fourth part of our matte painting tutorial series! This month we will tackle some pyro effects as we will try to set our nice castle on fire. What?! Well, at least we're not doing it for real!

I must say from the beginning that fire and smoke have an illustrative character and are not the subject of classical matte paintings, which are supposed to be "invisible art" and not contain any moving elements, such as smoke, water and birds, etc. (which are later added to the live plate by means of compositing!).



Fig.01

However, as before, we will assume that this is an establishing shot or an illustration of some sort and carry on tackling this brief. So here we go!

In images **Fig.01** and **Fig.02** you can see the before and after results of what we're going to do.

1. WHAT ARE WE AFTER?

So we've had our castle face winter, storms and creepy nights so far, and somehow it has survived them all... Now, let's see how it will

handle fire! *evil laugh* We will assume that some heavy explosion occurred just 15 minutes ago in the upper part of the castle. So, with that in mind, in this part we will focus less on adjusting the rest of the scene and more on how to create the pyro effects and how to think them through.

2. SCENE PREPARATION

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, we will consider this to be an illustrative piece. Therefore it is very important to sell the subject using appropriate moods and lighting



Fig.02



to emphasise the feeling. For this very reason I chose to replace the sky with an overcast one, in order to bring more heaviness upon the scene.

The process of replacing the sky by using a mask is the same as in all the previous parts (see back issues 026, 027 and 028), and you will see it again in the final part of this tutorial which is going to focus on these techniques, so I won't go into too much detail with this again here. Also, the first steps are similar to the ones we took in Part 3: Storm, and imply a little desaturation and darkening of the highlights (Fig.03).

Next we will break the monotony of the highlights in the original photo by creating scarce cloud shadows, which is yet another way to do this. We will simulate such random cast shadows by painting into the mask of a solid Color layer with a fairly dark colour set to about 65% opacity (Fig.04). Note that, because the distance between clouds and land is relatively high, the shadows cast are always going to be blurry and rather diffused. If the clouds are quite

small or the sun manages to peak through, you will see those typical cloud shadowed areas on the land.

You can control the shadow intensity by various means, like a grey shade used in the mask, overall opacity value or transfer mode, but pay attention never to exceed the 60-70% of the value of direct shadows (which you can reference from the original photo). For our scene I chose a pretty light and diffused shadow for more subtlety (Fig.05).

3. LET IT BURN!

Fire and smoke have always been considered pretty tough elements to paint if you're aiming for realism in your work. In matte painting you have the optional choice to find a stock that fits your needs (although these are rare!), or to use a smoke/gas simulation software (but the result is not so good sometimes). However, shockingly enough, we won't talk about these here. Instead, I'm going to show you how you can paint realistic smoke using custom brushes and some good old thinking!

4. CREATING THE BRUSH

When creating the custom brush we have to consider the various smoke properties and think how they can be translated into brush properties. The most important aspects that should be taken into account are shape, opacity and variation.

General considerations: Although smoke has a structure that resembles cloud formation, its composition is different from a chemical point of view and that affects the expansion pattern and speed. Smoke "dissolves" a lot faster than a cloud. Another important difference is that smoke is generated, hence it's thicker near the source and breaks up as it goes farther.

Brush Parameters: *Shape* – Smoke has a typical shape with irregular edges and resembles cloud structure. The basic brush shape can be sampled from an existing cloud texture – almost any would do. The element should be around 120-200 pixels big. Here you can find an example, please feel free to use it if you wish (Fig.06).

Shape dynamics – Smoke tends to gather in ‘groups’ of various sizes, which dissolve faster or slower depending on their densities and composition. We can mimic this by using a shape dynamics modifier set to Pen Pressure (**Fig.07**).

Scattering – This completes the above effect by scattering around the groups within a certain limit. Use both axes at about 120-130%.

Color dynamics – This assures a variation in shades. Apply a darker colour to the foreground and a lighter one to the background, and then set the foreground/background jitter to around 30% (**Fig.08**).

Other Dynamics – Finally, we also have to simulate the gaseous nature. The smoke is thicker if the density is higher, and it gets less opaque as the volume increases and the particles scatter around. We will set the Flow Jitter to ‘Pen Pressure’ and that should do it. If you need better control for some areas you can also set the Opacity Jitter to Pen Pressure.

5. APPLYING THE BRUSH

Now that we have our brush we can go ahead and paint the fire and smoke. Because fire will be painted in the same manner, I usually start with the smoke, but if it helps you to visualise better you can start with a quick fire placeholder – your choice!

Before starting it's good to take into consideration wind direction and speed because it affects the way smoke evolves, how fast it dissolves and its trajectory. Most of the time, considering a good smoke source and the strongest wind, the farthest smoke reaches without dissolving too much, which translates into a smaller occupied volume and higher density (aka higher opacity). In opposition to this, when there's almost no wind, smoke evolves on a vertical trajectory and expands fast, reaching big volumes in the upper parts with lower densities.

If the scene already has a predefined wind (either from a story or existing elements), you should be consistent with it, otherwise pick one

before starting and try to stay with it. Having the custom brush and all these in mind you can now start creating the smoke!

Since this is not a video tutorial I am very limited to what I can show you, but I can at least guide you through the process. It is important to be patient and to not expect immediate results, as this is a long and tedious process that often requires plenty of trial and error. Like with any painting, you should start by blocking down the basic shape of the smoke with a neutral colour. At this point you are after two things: shape and opacity. Take your time refining them as it will be harder to do this later on! I have made a quick example to show you what I mean (**Fig.09**), but normally you would want to spend more time on this.

The next step is to lock the layer (including opacity) and start adding different shades. For the beginning choose only two – one for highlights and one for shadows, which should of course match your scene's lightning scenario as well as smoke composition. Use fairly big sizes for the brush at this point (**Fig.10**).





Fig.06

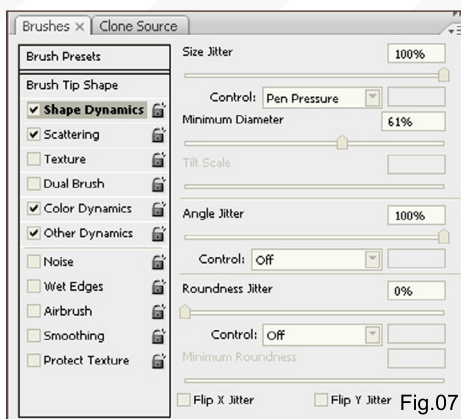


Fig.07

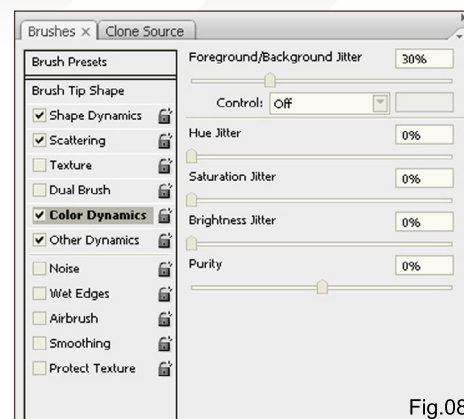


Fig.08

After you lay down the basic shading you can then get into the details (paint with smaller sizes) and additional shades. Remember: lighter shades on the parts exposed to light, darker shades in shadows and near the fire source. Again, don't expect immediate results; keep doing this until you're satisfied. You can also pick slightly coloured smoke – it doesn't have to be greyish and it will depend on your scene.

For this image it took me about 1-2 hours to paint the smoke. You can see the result here (Fig.11).

Fire is very simple to paint if you start with the smoke. The fastest and easiest trick is to pick a middle-toned orange, set the brush transfer mode to Color dodge and paint over the smoke. Or, use an extra layer and set it to Color dodge brush transfer mode. The latter offers you better control as you can later apply filters to just the fire alone, without affecting the smoke. With smoke, it takes a while to achieve the desired effect so be patient and experiment!

6. FINAL STEPS

You can enhance your smoke by adding subtle motion blur to it; this can often add a great deal of realism as smoke tends to evolve a

bit faster than the camera shutter, plus it's a moving element. For this, use Filters > Blur > Motion Blur and choose the direction of your smoke. The intensity should be around 10-15, depending on the size.

I hope this helps. See you in the next part of the series!

TIBERIUS VIRIS

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Fig.09



Fig.10





Fig.11

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ELEMENTS

DIGITAL PAINTING DOWNLOADABLE TUTORIAL SERIES

INTRODUCTION:

The 'elements' series is a 70 page guide to 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers. With in this downloadable PDF E-Book we have chosen some of the most used aspects of digital painting and asked 2 or 3 professional artists to cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side.

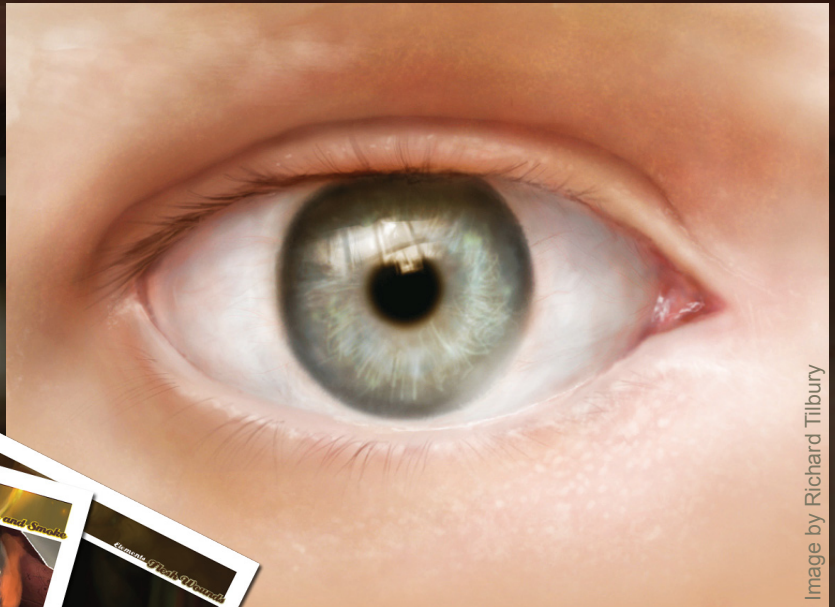


Image by Richard Tilbury



VOLUME 1:

- Chapter 1: Painting Eyes
- Chapter 2: Painting Fabric
- Chapter 3: Painting Fire & Smoke
- Chapter 4: Painting Flesh Wounds
- Chapter 5: Painting Fur & Hair

VOLUME 2:

- Chapter 1: Painting Rock & Stone
- Chapter 2: Painting Sky
- Chapter 3: Painting Skin
- Chapter 4: Painting Trees
- Chapter 5: Painting Water



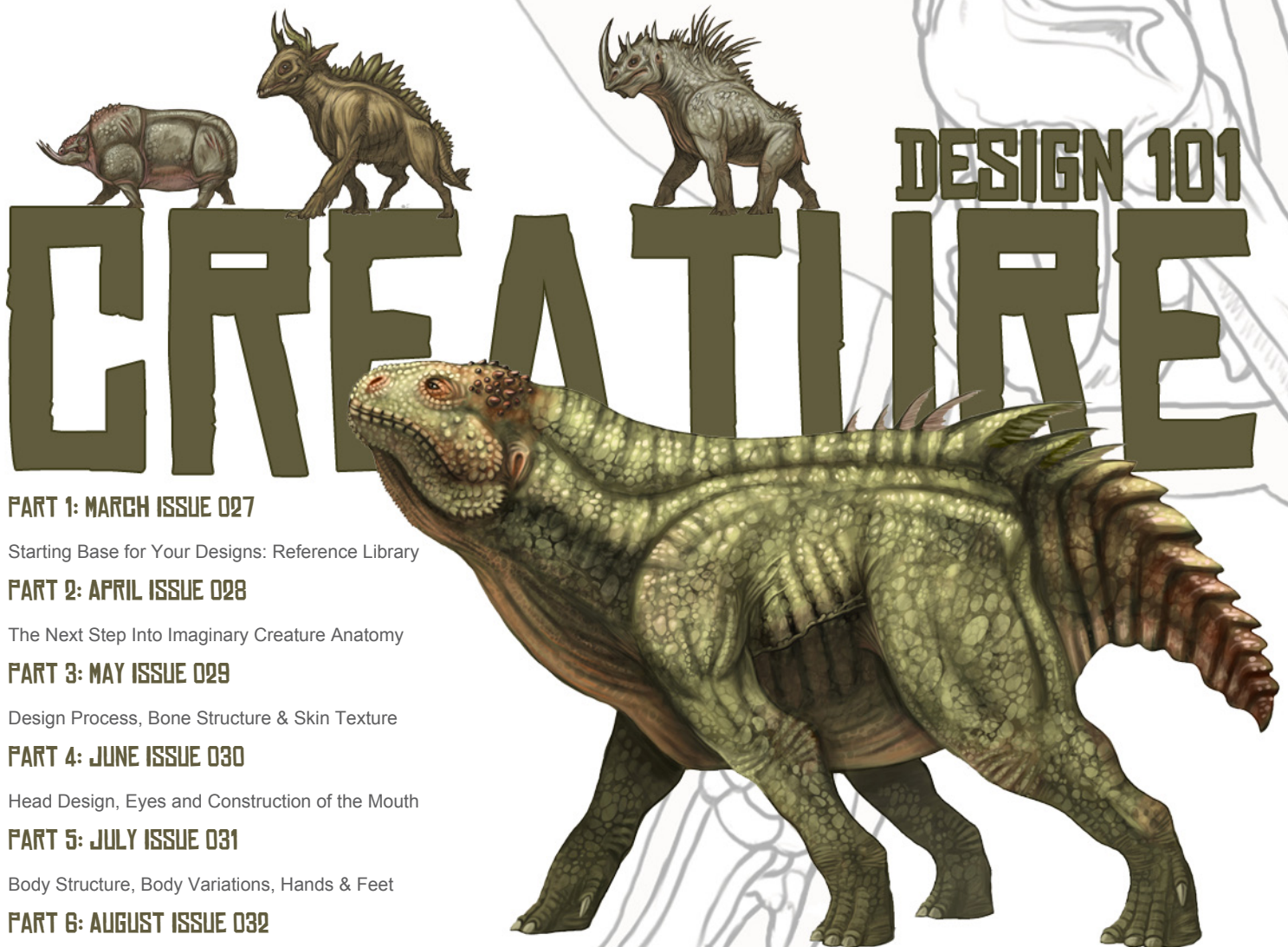
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"CONCEPTUALIZING A DESIGN AND COMING UP WITH SOMETHING THAT WORKS AND IS INTERESTING TO LOOK AT COMES THROUGH THE PROCESS OF A PHASE OF REDESIGN AND REFINING VARIATIONS OF WHAT SHOULD BE KEPT AND WHAT COULD BE CHANGED."



PART 1: MARCH ISSUE 027

Starting Base for Your Designs: Reference Library

PART 2: APRIL ISSUE 028

The Next Step Into Imaginary Creature Anatomy

PART 3: MAY ISSUE 029

Design Process, Bone Structure & Skin Texture

PART 4: JUNE ISSUE 030

Head Design, Eyes and Construction of the Mouth

PART 5: JULY ISSUE 031

Body Structure, Body Variations, Hands & Feet

PART 6: AUGUST ISSUE 032

Colours, Patterns and Final Renderings

CREATURE DESIGN 101

PART 3 - BONE STRUCTURE AND SKIN TEXTURE

INTRODUCTION

In this portion of the series I'm going to discuss and give some insight into a quick design process for producing a group of thumbnail sketches and refining one of them. Next we'll move on to a quick discussion on weight distribution and how the size of an animal or its design structure affects how its body plan is laid out. I'll go more in depth about skeletal structure but this time focusing on a fictional creature and taking that to a final design, leading up to discussions about texture. You'll see two final designs and be given information about the texture choices and how both parts 01 and 02 have led up to producing designs of this nature thus far.

01: THUMBNAILED

With the knowledge you've obtained about animal anatomy, animal classes and bone structures, you can pay more attention to proportions and design elements at this thumbnail stage than worrying about how precise the drawing is. I've quickly roughed out eight sketches without a lot of thought given to each. More time was spent on varying their body structures and the overall choices made to mix and match varying species without really producing any similarity to a known animal (Fig.01).

These were conceived quickly just laying lines down, throwing around shapes and erasing portions while adding or removing parts I liked. I was pushing the proportions and length of limbs and body parts on these to see where this process would take me. If I messed up it might



Fig.01

have been a good thing, maybe an extra limb appeared that I wasn't necessarily planning on, or the plausibility of it moving how I might have thought would be different – this is sometimes how more interesting designs develop!

02: A quick process you can fool around with for creature design is a front on view that is simply a mirrored effect, very much like the bottom right creature in the list of eight thumbnails. Just draw one half of a creature, or

even abstract shapes, and duplicate it. Once you've flipped and connected the two sides you've got a symmetrical front view that only took a few seconds or minutes. It doesn't necessarily have to read clearly to another viewer at this point, but it might spark an idea in your head that could lead to something very interesting. Once the two portions are connected you can even squash it, stretch it and draw on top to make it more asymmetrical.

03: DEFINED

Taking one of the previous thumbnails that I liked I've just begun refining edges, rendering out some parts and adding a bit of texture. It resembles an insect but not one specific species that comes to mind. This is a combined mixture of my knowledge and memory of insects I've come across in life, seen in movies, or viewed pictures of in books. It has a small resemblance of a cicada in the face, but unlike most insects it has more than one set of eyes which would put it somewhere in the class of arachnid; however it only has three pairs of legs, two of which are for walking. So you can see how this creature can resemble an insect, but it doesn't contain the specific traits that insects or arachnids are made up of. It's a type of hybrid which could be taken much further in exploration of its mouth and eating habits, as well as its walking cycle (Fig.02).

04: Conceptualizing a design and coming up with something that works and is interesting to look at comes through the process of a phase of redesign and refining variations of what should be kept and what could be changed. Try producing a set of thumbnails of a similar design, each with a few distinct changes. Take the one that appeals to you the most, which is more easy to see at a small scale. If it's interesting and works at a small thumbnail sized scale it will most likely work at a larger scale, too. It's the overall silhouette that is important in this case – the easily identifiable shape or outline.

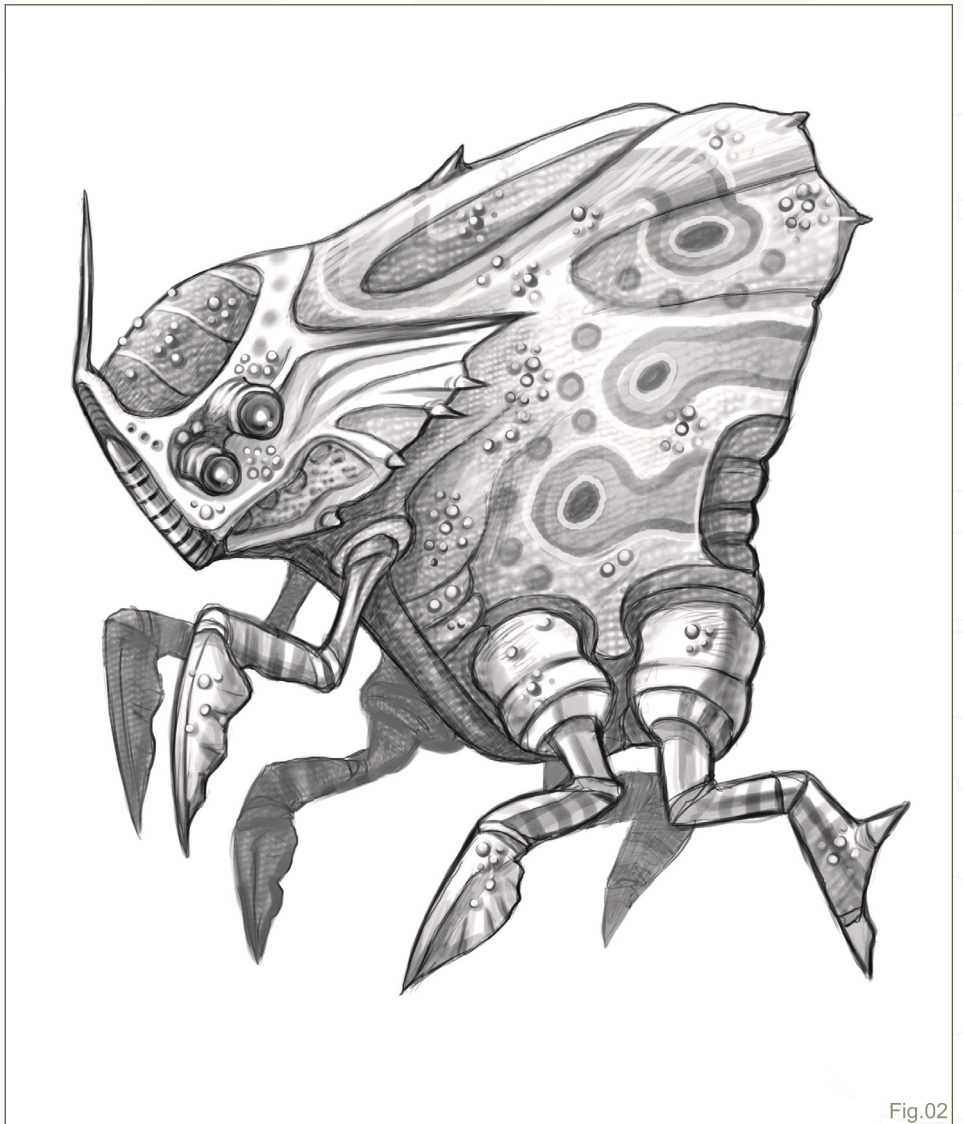


Fig.02

Once you have a design that is more defined, try working out the concept from a couple other angles, taking into consideration the width from a front view and how the limbs will bend. Explore it further by producing a few drawings with its mouth open, or it performing some sort of action. These don't have to be detailed but they will help you understand what is working and what is not. Scratch the useless parts and take a look at some references, or produce some additional concepts fixing the problem areas.

05: WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION AND SIZE

The size of a creature needs to factor in a lot of rules, in regards to how its weight is handled and how it is distributed and supported. When

you look at nature, you'll notice the smaller an animal or insect is, the less gravity and its weight affect the construction of its body type, mostly in the leg region. Something small like a bird can have a much larger body compared to the thickness and length of its legs. You'll find birds that have very long necks and a thick rib cage but their legs are long and thin. Birds in particular can have such a design because their bones are full of hollow cavities and very light, and their legs are capable of handling the vast difference in proportions. Lizards, especially smaller types, will usually have shorter legs that aren't very thick or large compared to the size of their overall body. This is because, in general, they don't have a massive amount of weight pushing down on the legs and their bodies are constructed so they aren't resting

all of their weight on the feet and ankles at any rate. Insects, arachnids and crustaceans are a completely different aspect of weight distribution because they have stronger body types; the muscles and organs are on the inside and the skeleton is on the outside, not to mention the multiple pairs of legs (Fig.03).

- A very large creature, something similar to an elephant for example, needs to take into account how the massive body and large bones will be held up. The larger a creature is in height and overall body size in a real world environment, pressured down by gravity, the more likely it will have less of a gap between its legs. So the length of the body in general would tend to be shorter with larger, thicker, strong-boned legs and wide, stump-like feet. This helps stabilise the weight of the creature on four large legs, taking short strides when walking, usually not allowing the animal to run and certainly not allowing it to jump or have all four legs off the ground at the same time. Now, in a fictional world, a creature could be constructed however you want, still taking into consideration the rules stated. But, If you were to give it stronger legs or perhaps a smaller torso and lighter bones, it could run fast and jump and all that. It's just more plausible to think of these things in terms of real world animals. The largest land mammals we have, such as giraffes, hippos and elephants, do not move

very gracefully; they are restricted to how they can lay down, how fast they can stand up, how they run and how flexible their bones are.

- As mentioned, insects and other related creatures in the arthropod phylum are a completely different subject altogether when it comes to weight distribution. The most important thing to remember is that they contain multiple sets of legs so the body can be vastly different in size compared to the thickness of one individual leg. The body can be the size of a soccer ball and the legs could be the thickness of a human thumb. This is because the weight is spread out and distributed to two, three, four or more pairs of strong, exoskeleton legs, built much like a hollow but strong bone. So even if the creature you're designing is quite large, if it has similarities to an arthropod, the body can be much larger than the legs.

- Concerning something like a crocodile which can grow to an enormous size, when you design something that has a longer backbone or a very lengthy body, it's most likely to have shorter legs that are positioned at the sides of the body. They are positioned at the side and not underneath the animal like some mammals, because it spreads the weight out also allowing them to rest the body on the ground and not on the legs. The same can be seen in most real world mammals or reptiles that have a

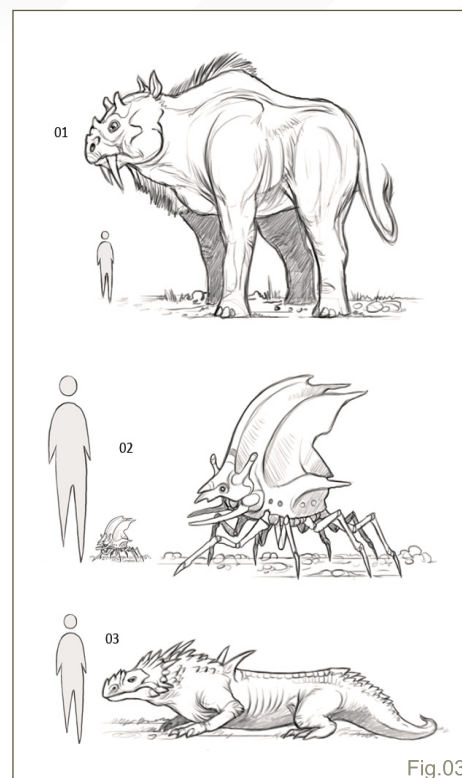


Fig.03

long backbone. If a creature does have a lengthy torso and backbone it's sure to have a much slimmer and lighter body like that of a cheetah or greyhound, both built for speed and containing very flexible vertebrae.

06: CLASSES COMBINED

Fictional anatomy always needs to abide by the fact that it is constructed of inner organs, bones, an exoskeleton and other important body parts that aren't always visible on the outside but are important. Just as an example, I've taken

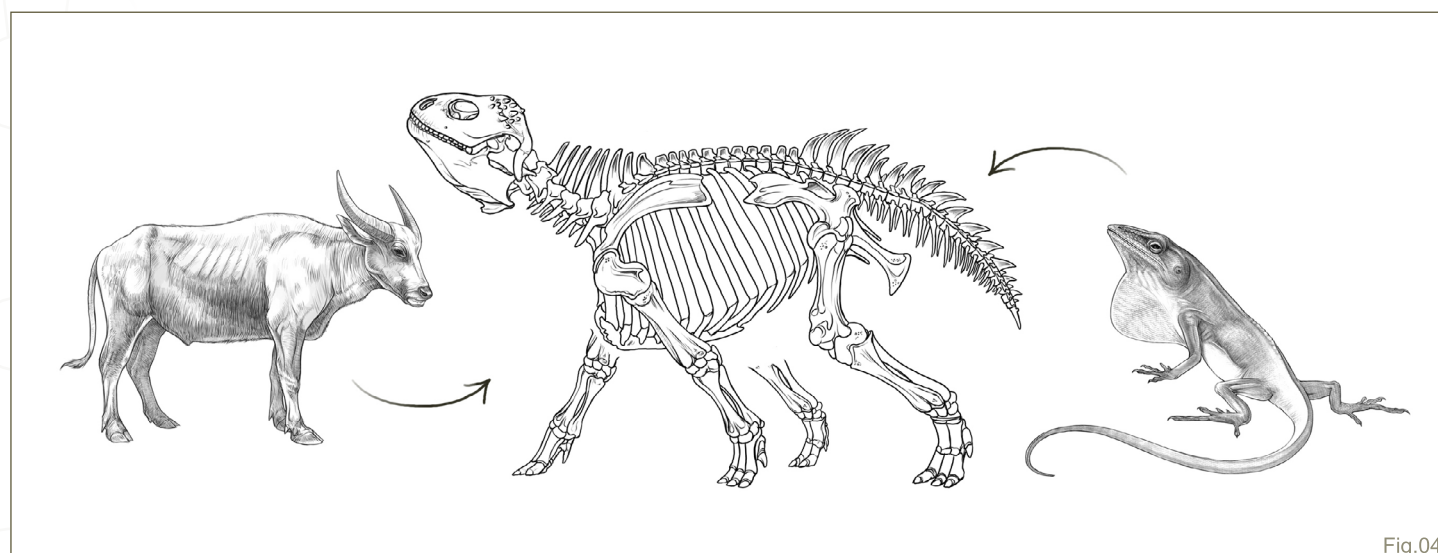


Fig.04

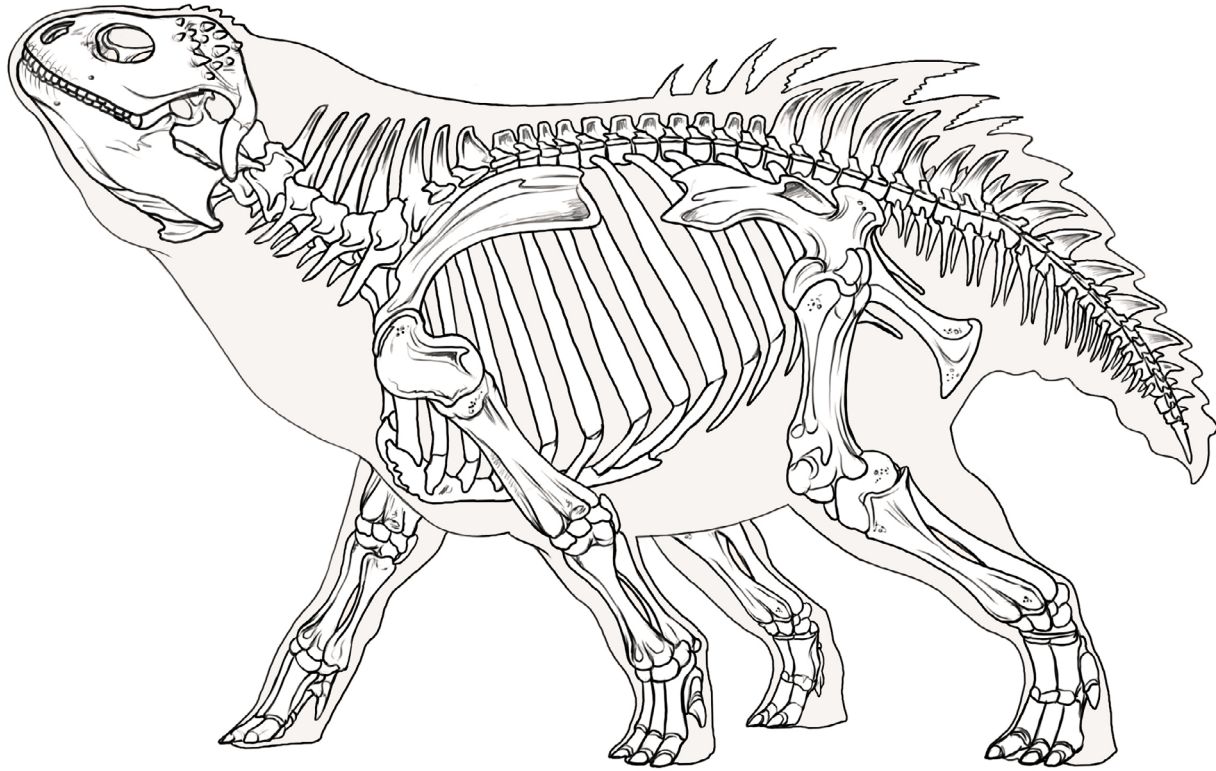


Fig.05

two different classes of animals and combined the body structures of their bones to create a fictional creature. The only reference I had was the knowledge of the previously drawn cow skeleton and the drawings I did of the pictured water buffalo and the anole lizard (Fig.04).

In order to create a believable fictional creature from skeleton to fully rendered colour and skin texture, it's sometimes very helpful to base the bones off of what you know (Fig.05). The design of this fictional skeleton is based off of the head of an iguana, although modified in various ways of length, thickness and bony spikes on the skull. The body is modified slightly from that of a cow and given the addition of a dinosaur-like tail, while the vertebrae were modified to fit the new back structure of my creature and its tail design. The legs were a combination of mammal and dinosaur, though I largely kept in mind this was a rather big

creature so the bones of the legs were to be thick and strong. Keeping in mind the weight distribution rule, I kept its leg length from the forearms to the hind legs at a rather short distance, even though the length of the legs from hip and shoulder aren't quite that short.

07: COLOUR AND SKIN TEXTURE

Having used my conceptual skeleton design I've outlined a rough silhouette to fit the type of creature I'm constructing here. It's going to largely resemble a dinosaur because of the iguana-like skull and the tail design. You always need to understand that the actual muscles and shape of a creature will be based off of how its bones are constructed, but there will be portions added that don't read visually from bone to skin. The muscles define the thickness of legs, neck, tail and overall body shape, giving off a different feel than just looking at its skeletal system.

The neck was designed to be very thick and muscular while also giving it a large stomach and a thick plated tail. These are things you can't quite discern from just looking at bones, not unless you're some type of specialist in that field. So you have to use what you know of animals in our world based on size, class and existing skeletal anatomy to construct the muscle and skin (Fig.06).

Now the texture and extra little elements, like the thin rear fin-like anatomy, are things that are completely up to you as far as a creature concept goes. Just because it has a head and body structure that resembles reptiles and dinosaurs doesn't necessarily mean it has to have the same skin texture! Just for simplicity's sake though, I'm going to go with the reptilian scaled rough skin look. Something that is important when applying any type of texture is to remember it's a texture, not a pattern,

meaning there should be flaws and variations in the size of the texture and perhaps some gaps in-between.

Notice how the scaled texture changes in size from the head to the neck to the rear thigh. The head contains much smaller scales than the larger portion of the body parts. Colour, although not very varied in this design, should also follow the same rule of being varied in hues and value. This is aside from lighting and shadows but just in general, lighter or darker colours and complimentary colours such as red and green. The more saturated bony segments on the top of the skull follow from a deep red down to the eye socket, from the nasal cavity to the underside of the neck, from the belly and leading to the back of the tail which again turns to a deeper red. It provides a nice flow from the front to the back in terms of the colour scheme.

08: LINE WORK

Just to give you a clear presentation of this design I left it in its line format. I'll sometimes

work rough sketches out and refine and polish them until they come out like the large reptilian creature concept, but there are other times when a nice clean line drawing can move the process along much quicker. It's at a rather low opacity but what I tend to do if the creature is in a static pose like this, is to lay down some cross lines to establish the centre of the creature and a perspective ground plane grid to lay down the legs so that they are all touching base. It doesn't always need to be perfect with the spacing of each pair of legs, but this is a similar but simple setup to that of vehicle design. It just helps establish a starting point and keep the perspective of the creature closer to what might be correct (Fig.07).

09: COLOUR AND SKIN TEXTURE: PART TWO

I've taken my line work and quickly laid down a base colour which is usually close to the darkest value I'll be using for such a piece. This helps to just lay down your colours and your highlights wherever necessary. The next step is to identify

the structure of the creature in terms of what parts are made up of what type of material. Whether it be a hard surface, a soft surface, a shiny surface or something more rough, the imperfections to textures is key to making them more believable. I've seen plenty of people produce what appears to be more repetitive patterns that just don't really occur in nature. Even something like a fish that has rows of scales all facing the same direction changes in the size of the scales as they reach larger parts of the fish, from head to the mid section and the tail. This insect-like creature contains elements of birds, beetles and even a bit of crustaceans, so the textures vary throughout (Fig.08).

10: TEXTURE CHART

Now for a little extra in-depth discussion about textures in general, and textures used on these two final designs. I mentioned it before but I'll say it again because it's an important aspect of design when you choose to go with one texture over another. It lets you know more about where this creature fits within our animal

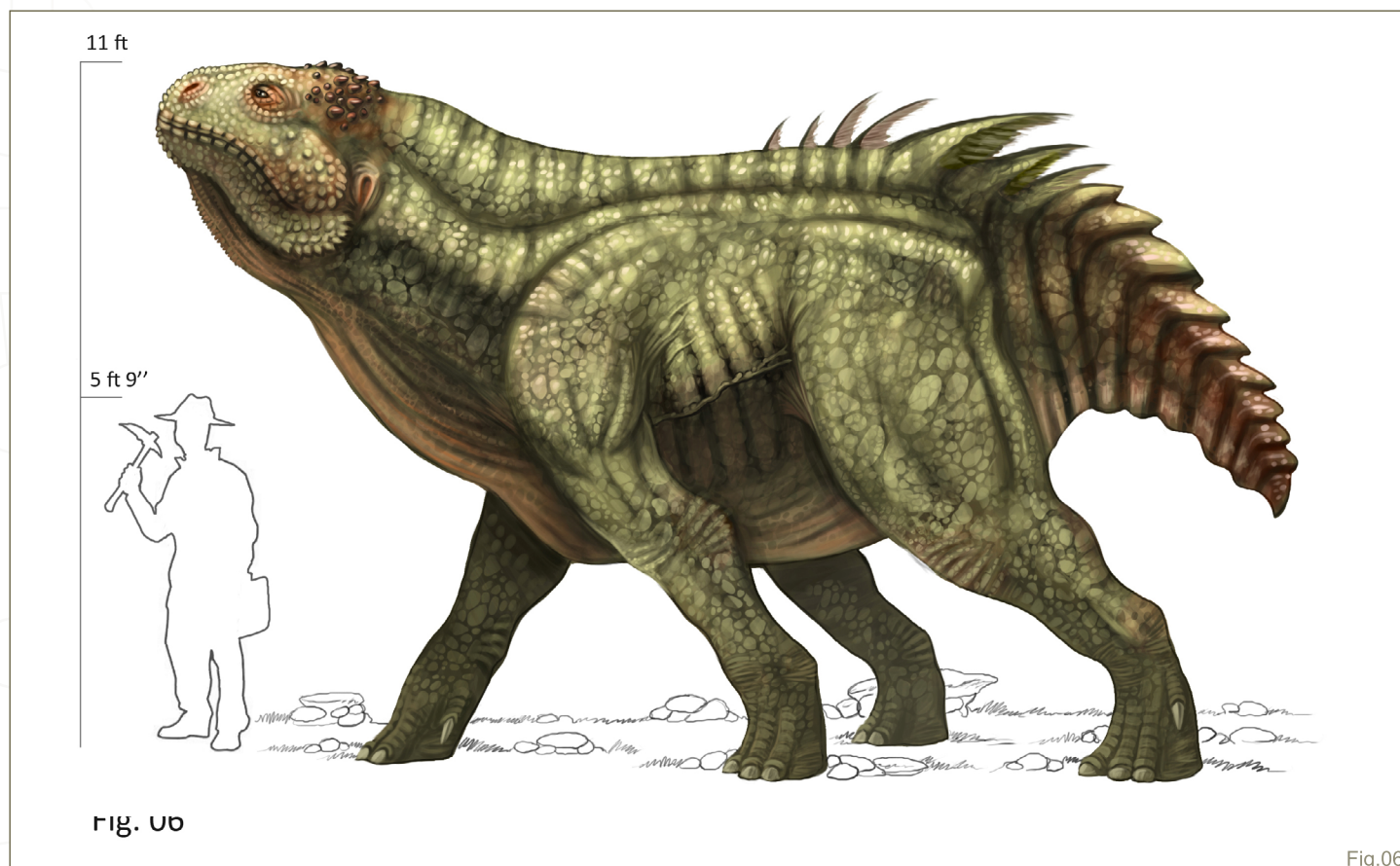
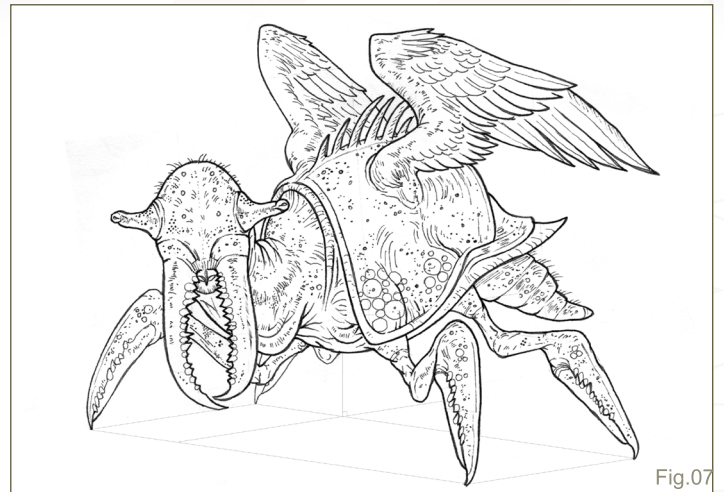


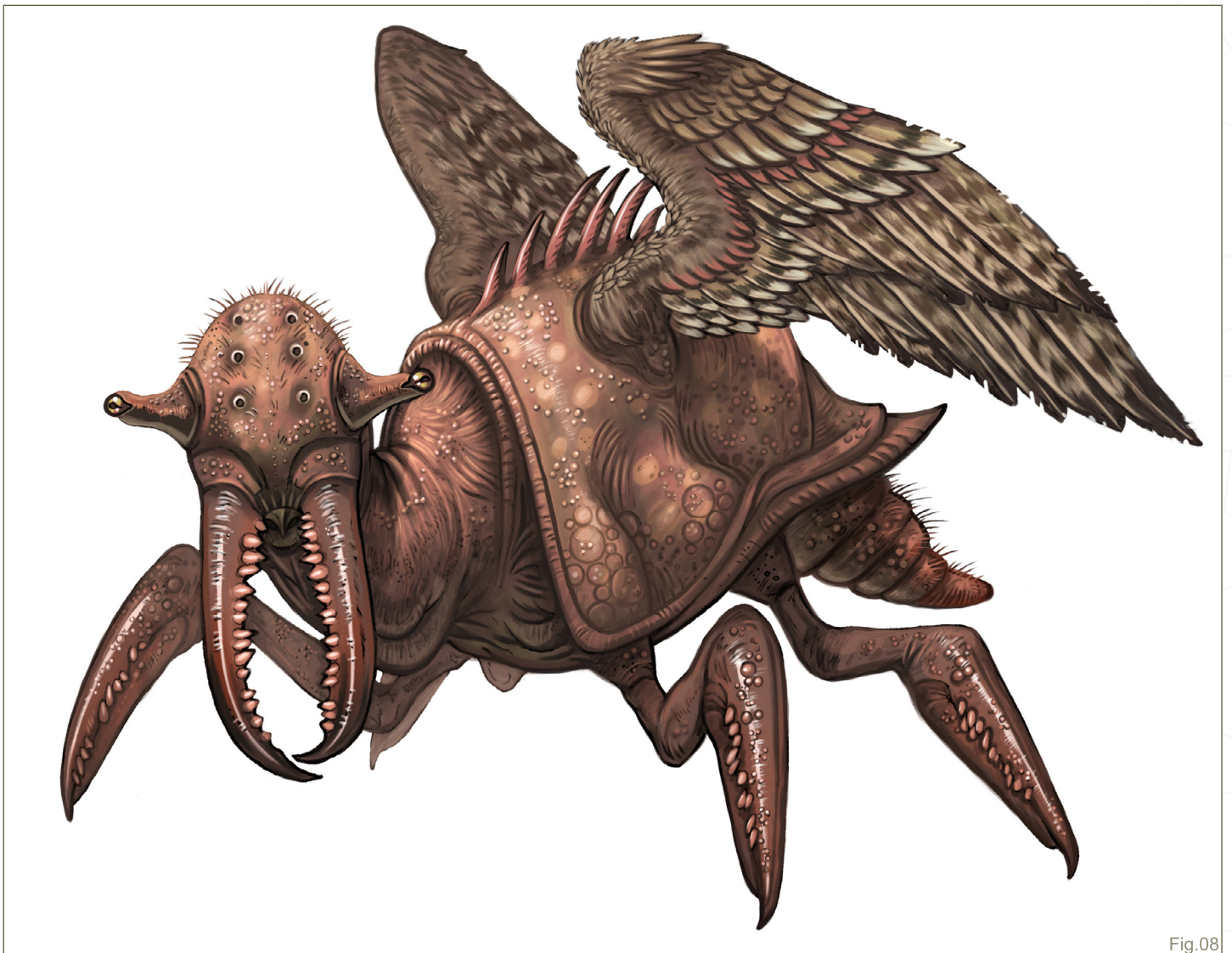
Fig.06

kingdom, if at all, and whether it's cold-blooded, warm-blooded and what its habitat is like. If you choose to provide your creature with a thick, heavy coat of long fur then it's probably obvious that this creature would live in a cold, snowy environment. Perhaps it lives in an extremely hot environment and the thick coat of fur protects it from the heat of the sun? Maybe it contains some way of cooling itself down internally while the fur fends off the sun rays (**Fig.09**).

Usually, if you choose to provide your creature with scales like I did then it tells you it's a cold-blooded animal that may or may not fit within the reptile class. It could also fit in the fish class or hell, who knows, maybe they are a rough-plated exoskeleton and it's some form of arthropod? It's up to you to decide what would fit with the design of your creature best. (**01**) You can see here that, although this isn't a texture, it would more likely be an appendage or extra element to the anatomy, like horns; however a bumpy texture like this can serve as a thick form of lizard skin or a spiked hide for the creature. (**02**) In keeping with the imperfections, this helps to pop out a few scales or bumps by increasing the shadow and highlight in



some areas, and changing the shape or direction of other scales, like the pointed portions. (**03**) For the overall body, the scales vary in shape and size as they spread from nose to tail and those different shapes increase in size on larger, more bulbous parts of the anatomy like the neck, stomach and thigh. These scales aren't highly defined but flow more



smoothly on the same level across the body.

(04) In addition to flat-based scales, the neck just got a light treatment of darker scales which served more as a spotted pattern scattered here and there.

(05) Moving on to some textures from the winged insect creature, the wings are an overlapping texture of colour break up and slight feathered strokes creating a pattern as well. (06) Small, tough hairs are often found on insects which can also serve to define the surface texture of an area, whether they be sparse in layout or closer together. (07) Smooth, softer

skin can be comprised of a few imperfections and bumps, and the use of wrinkled strokes to define flaps of overlapped skin. (08) Areas that are made up of a harder surface material, like an exoskeleton, create a bit of a shine, like the crustacean claws. The same goes for spikes or horns; if you darken the tips and lighten the colour as it reaches the point of origin, you can then lay a stripe of white for highlight. The white highlight gives off the effect that the material or texture of the body part is shiny, which usually happens when something is either wet or very smooth and hard, like the exoskeleton of an insect's back. Most beetles, when looked at from

a microscopic point of view, are filled with colour and shiny highlights.

PART 4 will take an in-depth design look at conceptual heads and how mouths are constructed!

MIKE CORRIERO

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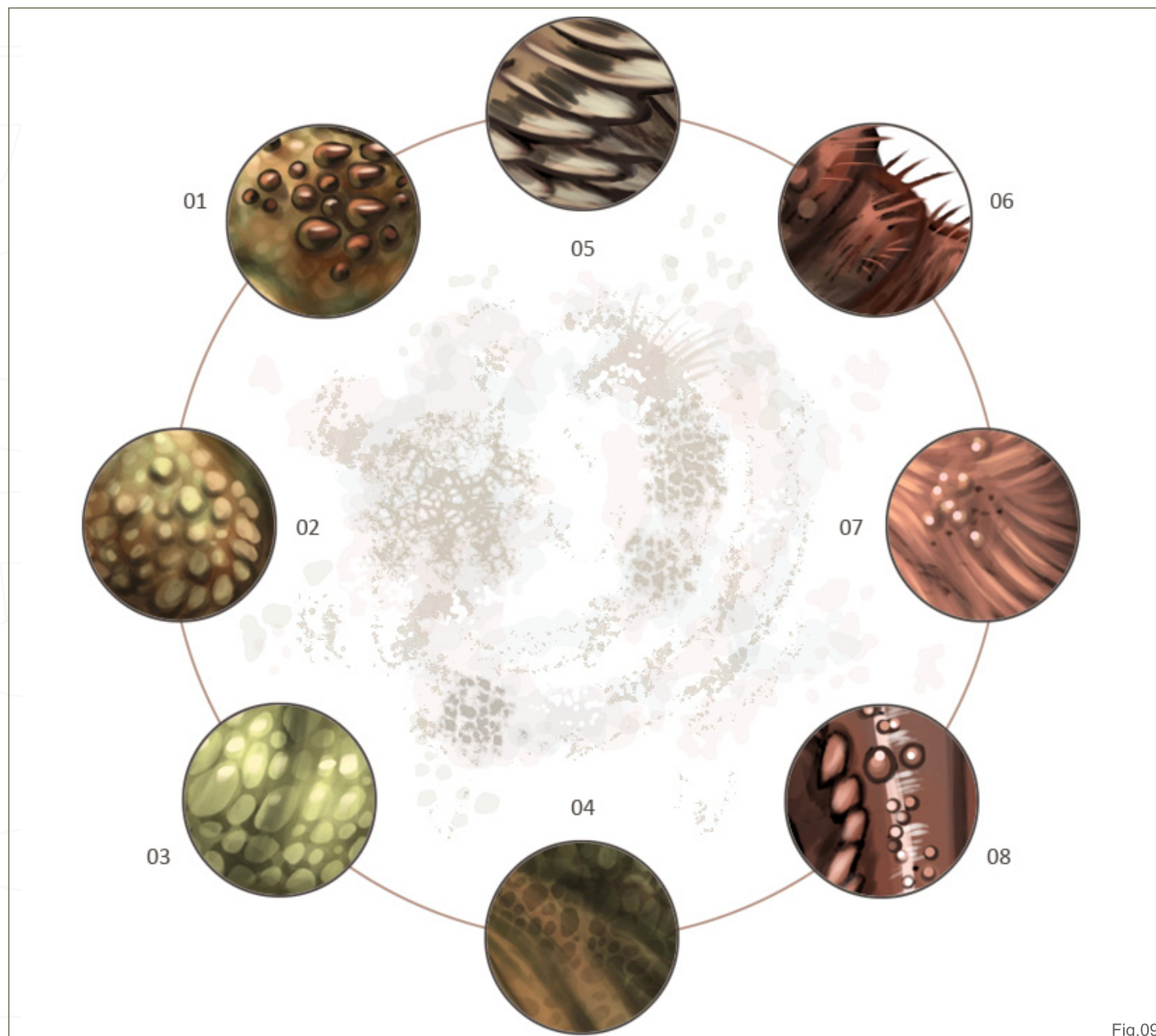


Fig.09

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Lord Something

making of by Louis-Philippe Lebel

Louis-Philippe Lebel shares how he creates his image, "Lord Something" ...

"I ALWAYS START IN BLACK AND WHITE WITH THE BASIC SHAPE. THIS WAY, IT IS EASIER TO FIND THE RIGHT PROPORTIONS AND IT'S ALSO EASIER TO MODIFY THE SUBJECT IF ANY CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE."

LEBEL
2007

MAKING OF LORD SOMETHING

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

Most of the time, when I begin on a sketch, I have a clear idea of what I want to illustrate. For "Lord Something", I wanted to create a cartoon character using pure lines and lighting that went from warm to cold.

SKETCH AND SHAPE

First, I opened a new PSD: size 2500 x 3000 at a 150 to 200 dpi. (Later, I framed the image for the compositions.) Using such a large PSD gave me more space for experimentation during the project, but size remains a question of choice. With time I've developed a technique which is efficient and rapid.

I always start in black and white with the basic shape. This way, it is easier to find the right proportions and it's also easier to modify the

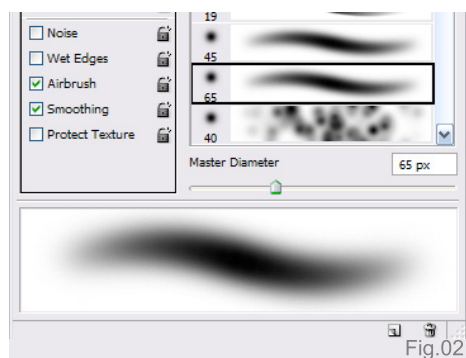


Fig.02

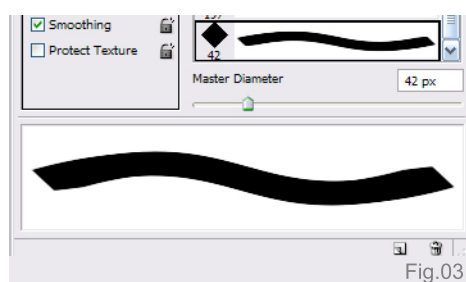


Fig.03



Fig.01

subject if any changes need to be made. Within five minutes I had a very good idea of what the final result would look like. On a grey background, I started working with brushes of crushed lozenge shape (100% opacity) to block the contour shape. To pinpoint the shape of the character, I used a softer brush with pale colours (25-40% opacity). As with any artistic work, I used the trail and error technique until I was satisfied (**Fig.01**, **Fig.02** and **Fig.03**).

LIGHTING AND SHADING

Once I was satisfied with the shape of the character, I started to consider the lighting sources and their directions, working once again in black and white. For this illustration, I wanted cold lighting in the front and warmer lighting

in the back. This is a very simple method that enables you to give a sense of "drama" to the look of a character.

For the skin appearance, I wanted a cadaverous surface - rather waxed and translucent. Using a custom brush, I pricked the spots on the skin where the light hit to make the pores of the skin more apparent.

For the translucency of the skin, I added veins to the temple of the head and at the junction of the cheeks and nostrils. With these details I always add layers either in multiplicity or overplay, as needed. The best method is always to test different layers and adjust them as you proceed (**Fig.04** and **Fig.05**).

COLOURATION

I wanted a simple colouration overall. The light effects created the greyish colouration you can see on the face of the character. As a base, I duplicated my layers, using the different levels of grey. On this duplicate, I played with the hue to find the desired dye or complexion. Once found, I placed a mask on this layer and erased what I didn't want. As I wanted two different sources of light on my character, I used the same technique for the second source of light. For an illustration it is better to keep it simple and not use too many colours; try to use no more than three or four because the end result is much better. As a finishing measure, I refined and accentuated certain spots to better define where the light sources were (Fig.06).

PUT ON SOME TEXTURE AND REFLECTION

Once the colouration was complete, I could now start texturing. Using photos of textures, I searched for the most realistic finish. For example, for the collar of the vest, I applied a tissue texture. Here is how I proceeded: I applied the chosen texture on another layer, either in soft light or in overlay. Then, with the Photoshop tool CS2 (Wrap tool), I distorted the texture to adjust it with the perspective and the folds in the collar. For the reflections, the method is similar but this time I used the picture (in black and white) of a window. The secret is to have a picture with as much detail as possible, so that you can see all the deformities and the contrasts in the texture. Once more, I erased the surplus, with a mask on the respective layers (Fig.07, Fig.08 and Fig.09).

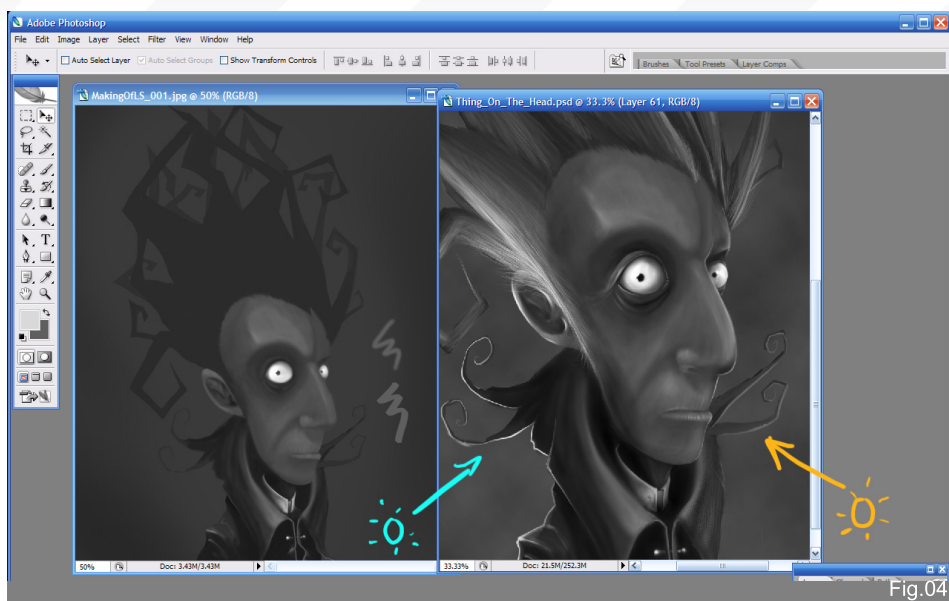


Fig.04

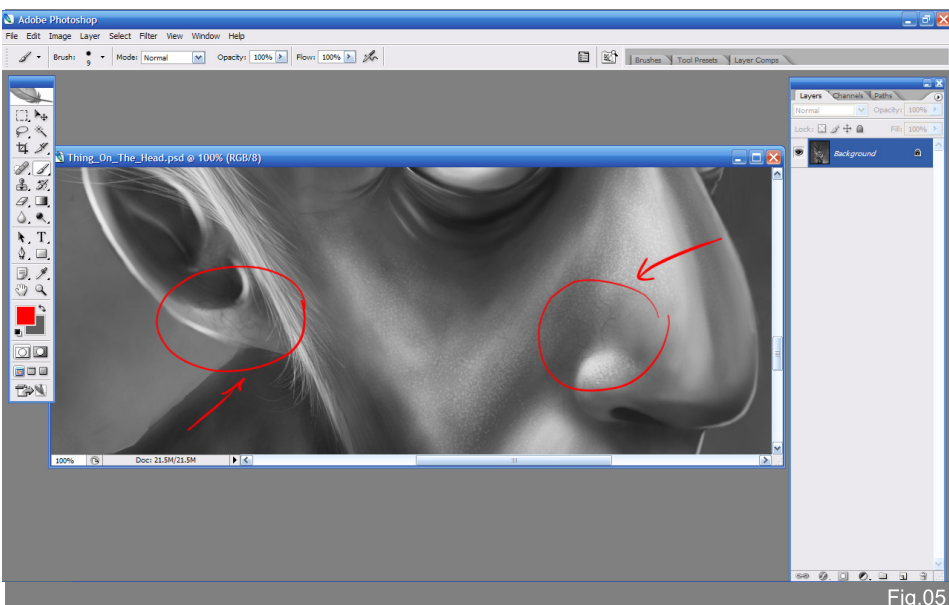


Fig.05

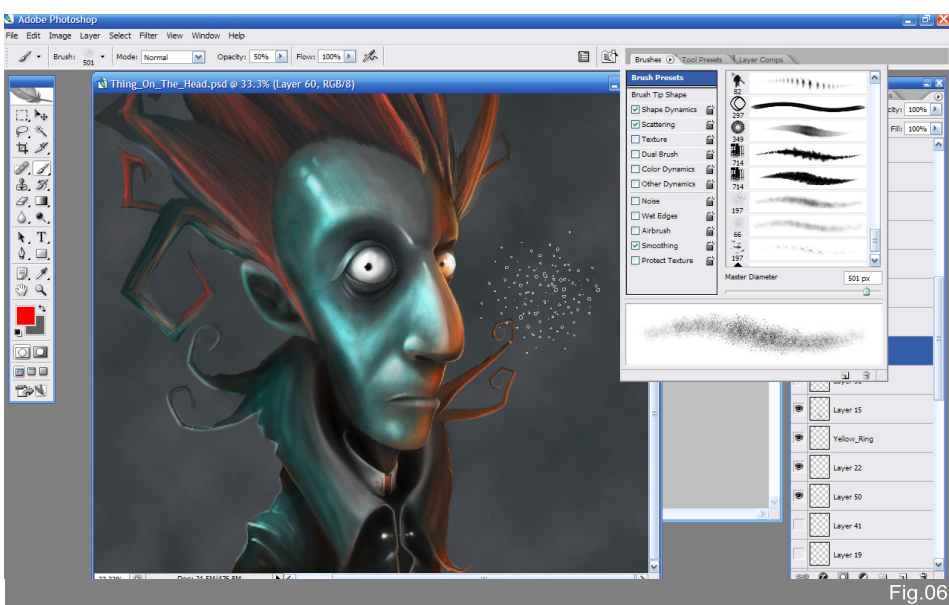


Fig.06

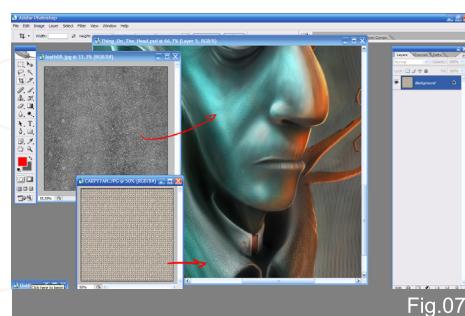


Fig.07

COMPOSITION AND THE FINAL TOUCHES

As a final step, I looked at the composition of my illustration. Even with the best illustration in the world, if the composition is deficient, the impact will be totally different. In this case, I had a square framing and I knew I wanted to reposition my character. There are many theories regarding the composition of an illustration. Personally, I prefer the rule of the third and the focus of interest. For this illustration, my focus was on the eyes and therefore, I situated this focus point on the third part of the image. I could elaborate more on the composition of an image but it is up to you to do your own research on the subject. I easily spent one hour just on the composition of the image.

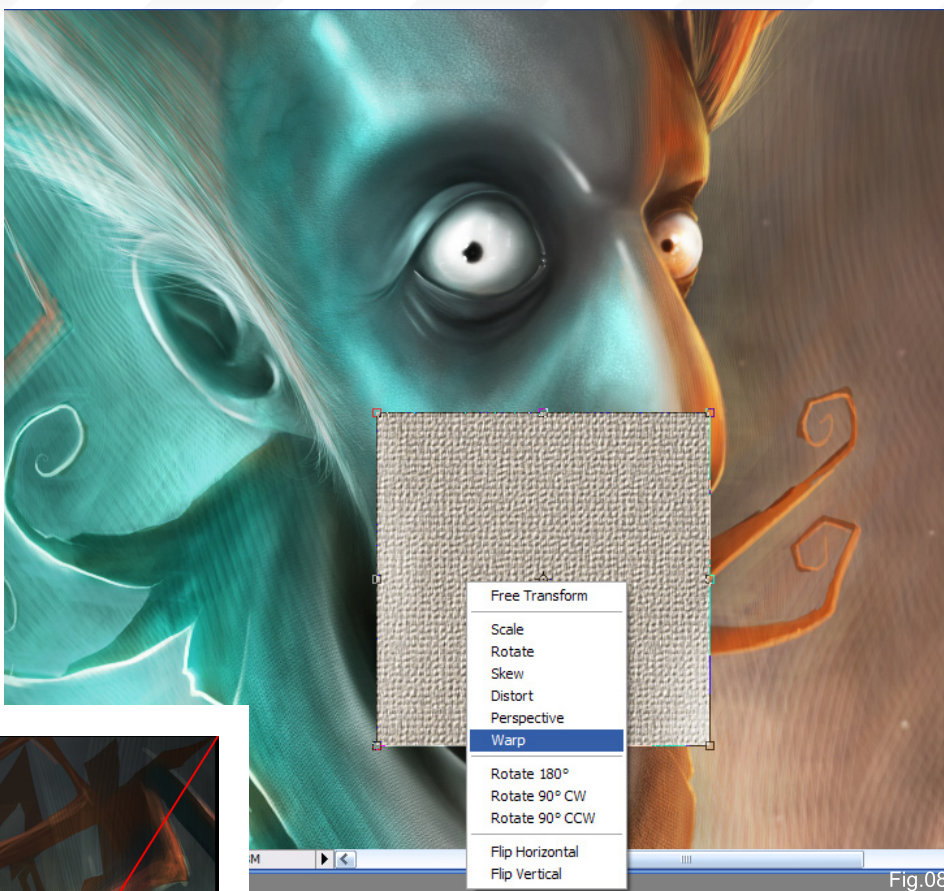


Fig.08



Fig.10

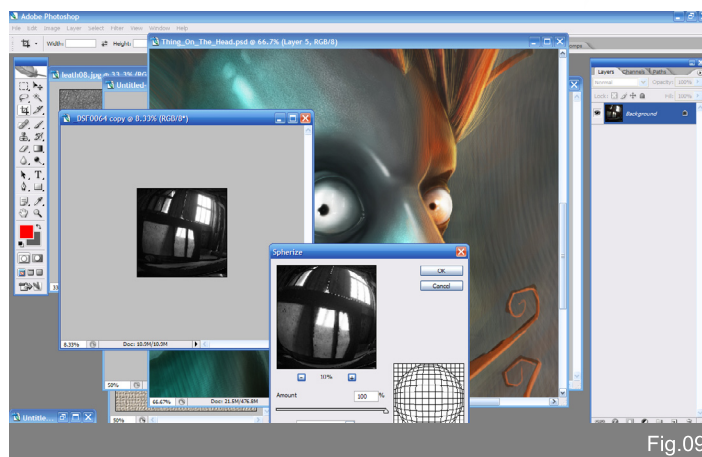


Fig.09

My finishing touch was to adjust the colours and contrasts to enhance the overlook of the illustration (**Fig.10** and **Fig.11**).

I hope you enjoyed this!

LOUIS-PHILIPPE LEBEL

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Fig.11

"BY PAINTING ON IT WITH WHITE, OR RUBBING AWAY WITH THE ERASER, YOU CAN INTRODUCE 'LIGHT' BACK INTO THE GLOOM. I USED A SINGLE LIGHT SOURCE OVERHEAD TO ILLUMINATE THE SCENE AND PICK OUT DETAILS ACCORDINGLY."



In this "Making Of", Nick Harris, a 2D concept artist, shows you how to create this image by using Photoshop, Painter and ArtRage. He takes you through the methods and techniques he used when creating "Did Somebody Just Say Ow...?".

"DID SOMEBODY
JUST SAY OW...?"

DID SOMEBODY JUST SAY OW...?

CREATED IN:

ArtRage, Painter & Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

This piece was done for a friendly challenge over at Pixelbrush.com. I wanted to use it as an exercise to take ArtRage for a spin; see what it was capable of. It's a very handy bit of kit, especially considering the very modest price tag. It has limitations like all software, but I actually like how it makes you rely more on old fashioned drawing skills rather than trying to solve all your problems for you. The donkey work for this piece was done in ArtRage, but a need for speed, particularly near the finish, had me opening up Painter and Photoshop, too.

Given longer I could have accomplished all this in the one software.

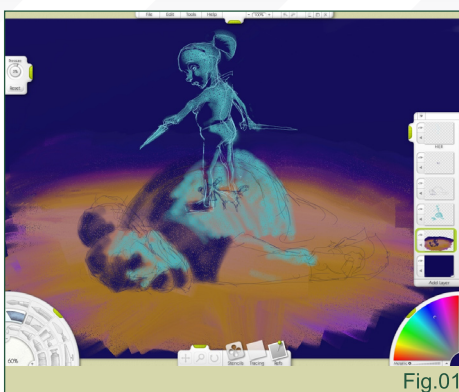


Fig.01

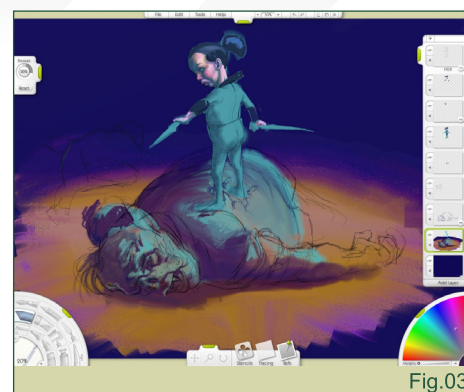


Fig.03

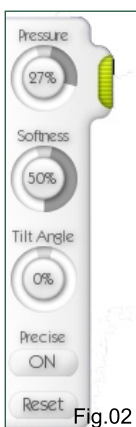


Fig.02

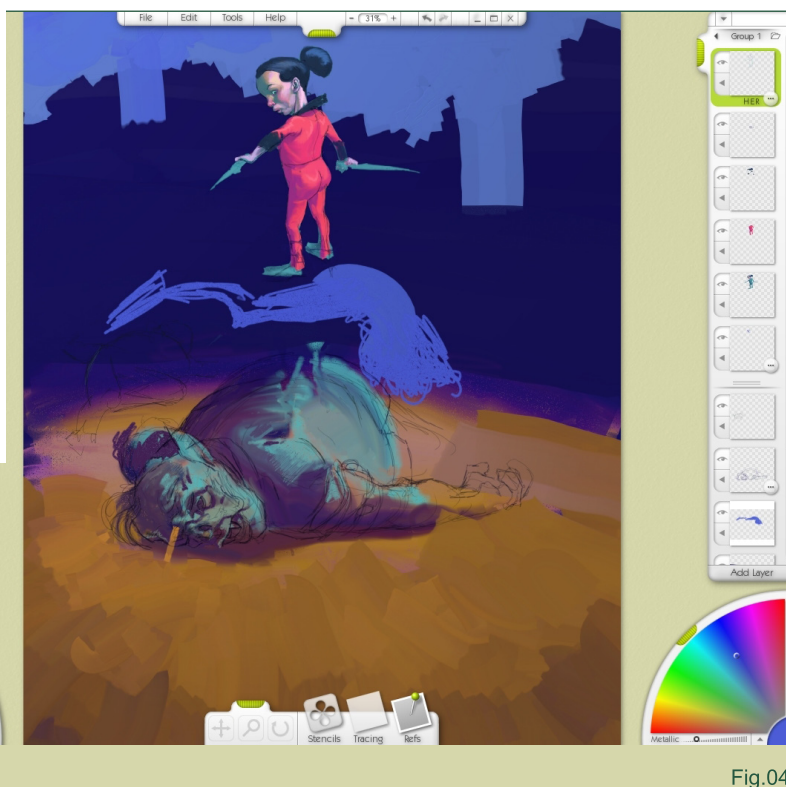


Fig.04

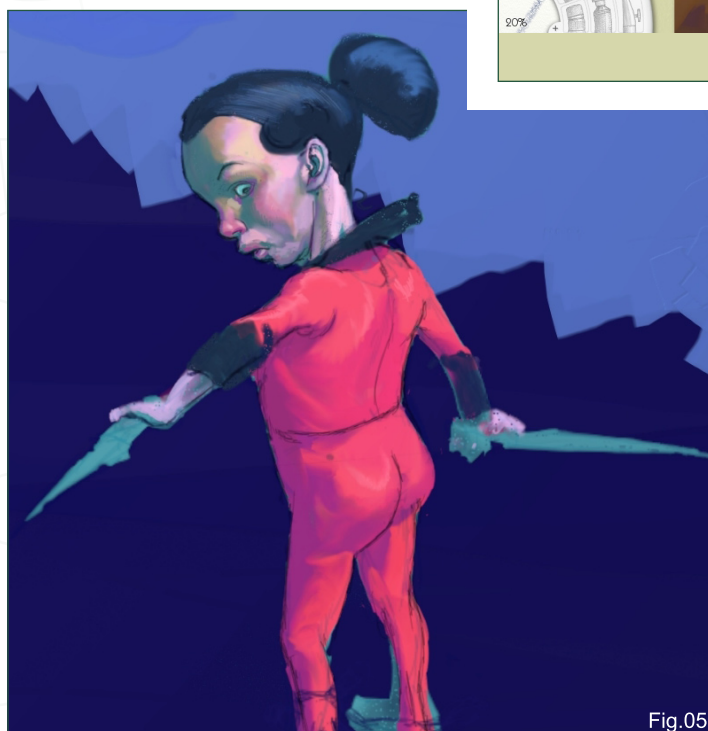


Fig.05

I'm on aPentium4 3GHZ processor with 2 Gig RAM, using a Wacom Intuos3 now – but I used to have much less powerful kit and got away with it.

Starting in ArtRage 2.5 (full licence), I accepted the default document size (32.5x24cm-100dpi approx) to start sketching and slapped in a blue background with the roller set to maximum size. This was for a Halloween-themed image and a night-time palette with blue/purple bias seemed appropriate. My idea was about a kind of mini version of "Super-Buffy" in the scene of her latest slaughter, with a tiny dog clamped to her leg. Yes – I used to watch a lot of cartoons. I blocked in a few shapes (paintbrush) and lines (precise pencil) on several layers. Save stages regularly, labelled in a way that suits you (Fig.01 and Fig.02).

A need for speed had me bypass making thumbnail sketches (not recommended – slap my legs for being naughty!). I had a loose idea

but no solid composition at this stage. Adding elements on separate layers allowed me the flexibility to play with the composition throughout the process. I firmed up the forms in the girl a bit, remembering to name a few key layers and taking advantage of the software's ability to have layer groups. I grouped all the layers for her character together, which meant I would be able to move her about more easily, later on. Typically a group will contain a layer for the drawing on top of a shading layer and a base layer of opaque local colour (**Fig.03**).

If you're going to use a lot of layers you must keep organised. Name layers as markers and merge together whenever you feel you can.

Compositionally I decided the girl would be more impressive if she had a higher body-count at her feet, so I expanded the canvas vertically to make space for more victims. (Note: In ArtRage - Edit/Resize the Canvas - remember to un-tick the keep original aspect box, if you're changing the canvas shape). A great reason for starting off in ArtRage is the ability to add scaleable reference images on screen. You can paste your original idea/s up to look at, or reference, of course (**Fig.04**, **Fig.05** and **Fig.06**).

Because I felt my heroine would stand out more in red, I tried the colour out on a layer over her blue suit. I also added some blocky shadow to aid the form on this layer. You can shade more subtly later, painting on layers set to Multiply blending mode over the top. (The dog idea was abandoned at this point and the layer deleted.) Hitting the H key flipped the image horizontally and allowed me to check to see how off kilter the drawing was. It's a good habit to get into.

I roughed out some cemetery headstone shapes in the background, and introduced more victims to her pile. Each was on a separate layer as I played with their character and placement. The more character I could give them, the more believable they would be, and the more points of interest there would be to keep the viewer

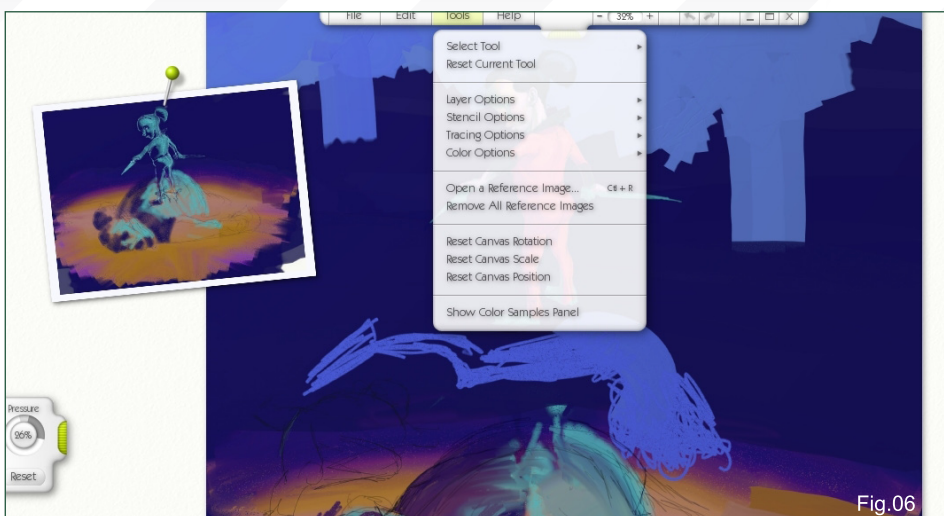


Fig.06

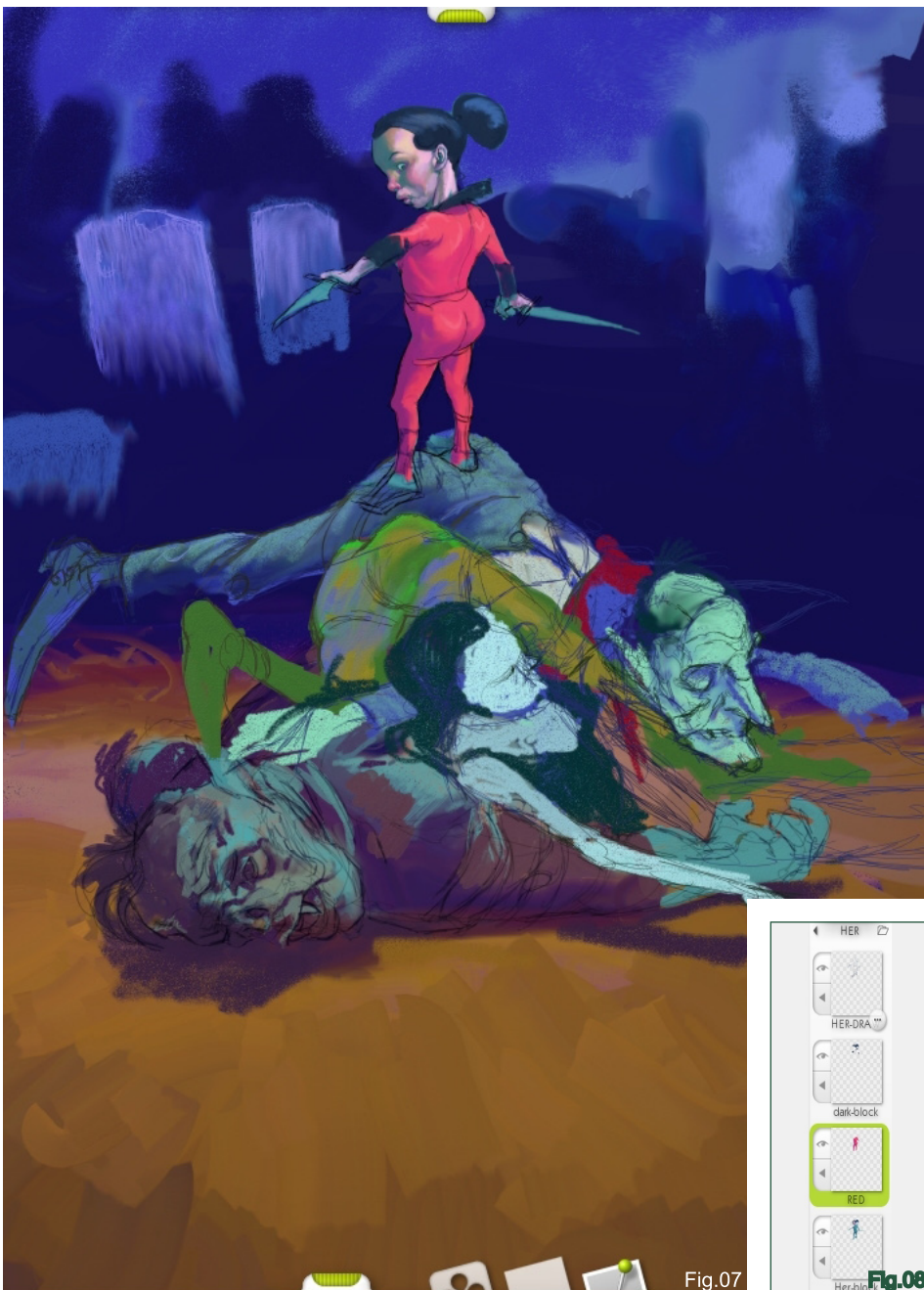


Fig.07

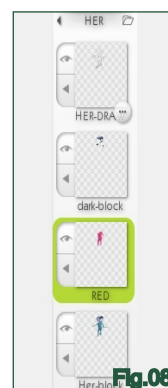


Fig.08

interested. I planned to give them a group of their own, like the girl's, later (Fig.07 and Fig.08).

Notice how I separated her hair on its own layer, so that I could work freely on it without worrying about having to keep retouching her face? I had to be careful that the two would work together without it resembling a crash helmet. I merged them as soon as you could and softened the edges in places to make it more natural. This kind of separation of parts is useful but can lead to way too many layers, even for me! Remember the need to keep control – apart from anything else, everything will slow down as the file size soars if you don't.

Something I particularly like in Artrage is the ability to make stencils out of images. Using texture images I have on disk already, I opened the stencil palette and navigated to a folder I'd already made called 'Textures' (you can put your new stencils in whatever stencil folder you prefer). Click on the 'Add New Stencil' button and you can browse your system to an image file of your choosing. Open the image and the stencil is created. They appear as red rectangles (see image). Right-clicking on a PC gives you the option of inverting the stencil (Mac users have to navigate through the tools/stencil). There are really handy stencil transform options using the

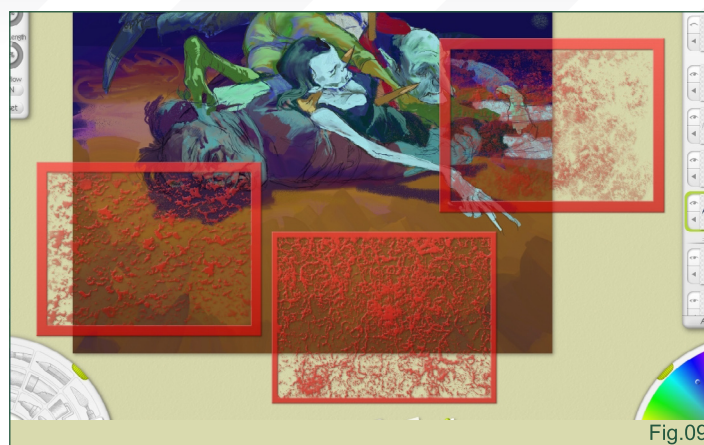


Fig.09

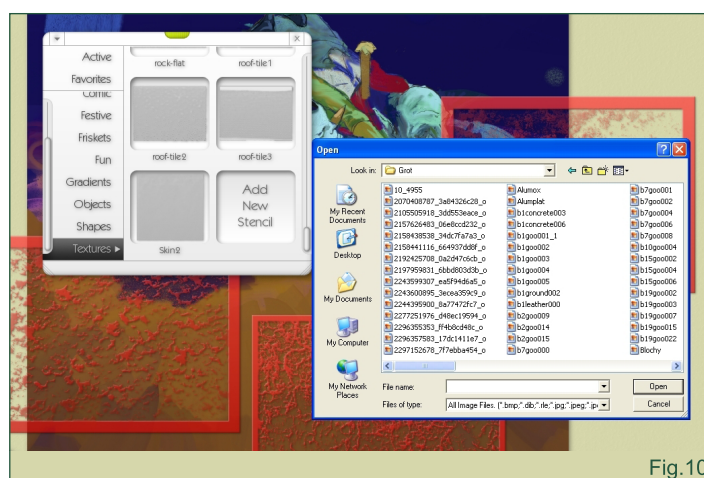


Fig.10

space bar (move), Alt/Option (scale) and Ctrl/Command (rotate) keys (PC). You can also leave them hidden in place, making them temporarily inactive (Fig.09 and Fig.10).

I upped the dpi to 200dpi by the way (image size is 32.5x40cm) – so keeping layers under control becomes more important for file size issues.

To help unify the lighting, I created a flat blue layer on top using the roller. Changing blending mode to Multiply (right-click and navigate to change from default), I reduced the opacity. By painting on it with white or rubbing away with the eraser, you can introduce 'light' back into the gloom. I used a single light source overhead to illuminate the scene and pick out details accordingly. I consolidated the forms of her victims somewhat in 'body colour' (sorry about the pun), and airbrushed some darker shadows on another 'Multiply' layer. This is something else I do a lot. Although again, I repeat: merge these layers when you can to keep the thing moving along and control the file size a bit (Fig.11 and Fig.12)!

Still keeping it loose, I worked some more form and detail into the critters, using stencils in places to add texture and interest. If you add the texture on a separate layer, it's a snip to fiddle with it using the painting tools to make it sit more naturally without affecting the forms you've already

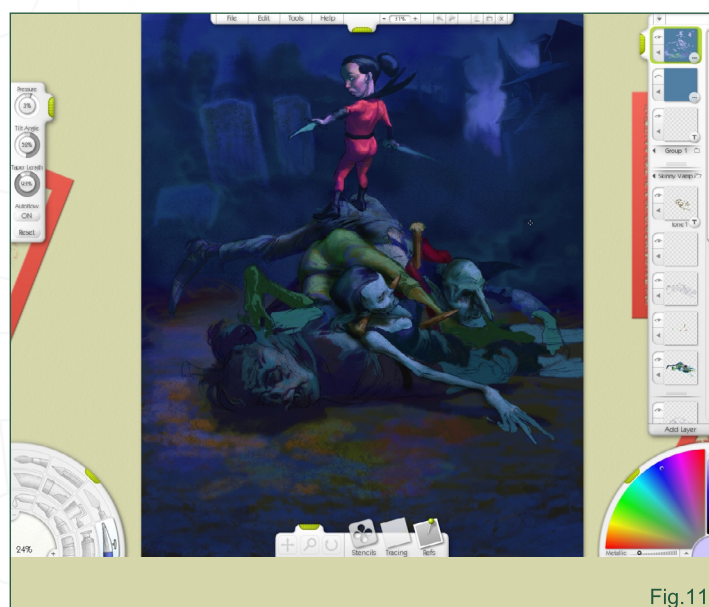


Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13

created. Merge when you have something you like. Repeat for more texture. Experiment with blending modes, too – combinations of several texture layers can produce some interesting results (**Fig.13**, **Fig.14** and **Fig.15**).

You can use stencils when cutting back from the blue shadow layers as well, but make sure to switch the stencil off and on regularly to view what you're doing. The red stencil colour can be a little distracting.

I gave the background a bit of attention too, muting it down somewhat and adding more of a glow on the horizon to hint at a village nearby. I continued merging layers when I was happy with the effect and working on new ones to move on.

Working on the fly meant that I had lots of things to resolve, like the exact positioning and size of

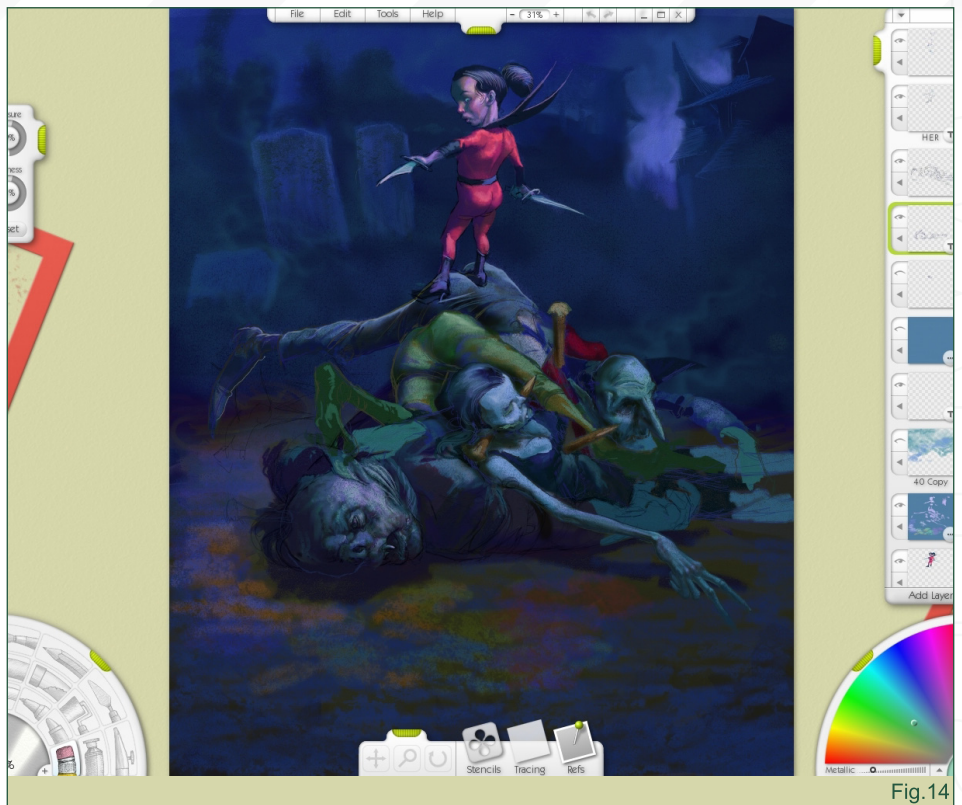


Fig.14



Fig.15



Fig.17



Fig.16

the fiddly bits, like hands and feet. In this case it included things like the rather uncomfortable placement of her right foot - somewhere I'd hate to have one put myself. Add little details like that as they occur to you. They don't have to be finished, just marked in so you don't forget them. (**Fig.16** and **Fig.17**)

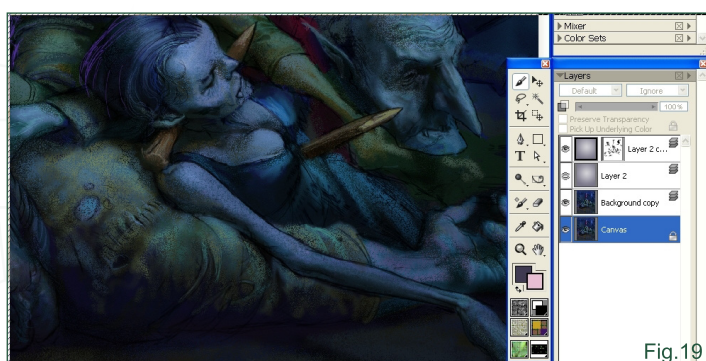


Fig.19

The DPI was now at 300 and image size 28.5x35cm so that details could be tackled at full resolution. I also reduced the print size slightly to tighten things up.

I kept working on points of interest all over the image, zooming in and out regularly so that I could see what was working and what wasn't. I added texture and then worked back into it some areas with the palette knife tool on its most effective setting. Since enlarging the file size, the lag in ArtRage was impeding my progress, so for bigger changes to lighting



Fig.18

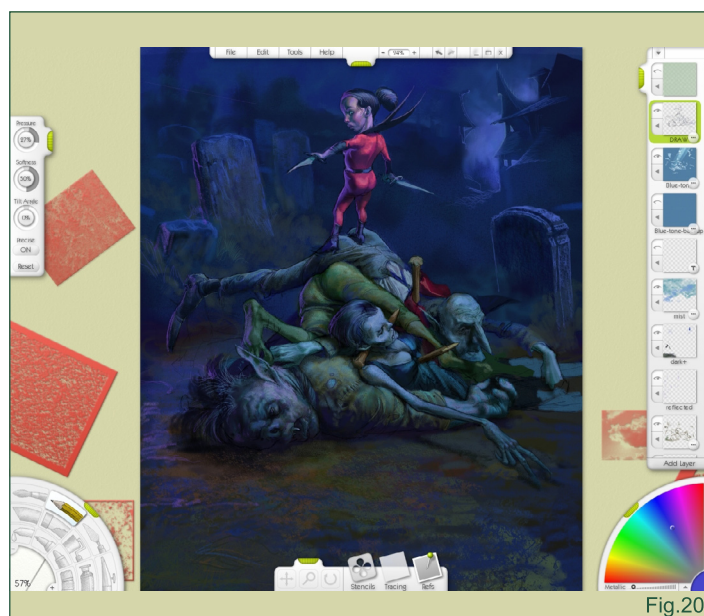


Fig.20

etc. I saved the image as .psd and opened it in Painter or Photoshop – Painter for painting and Photoshop for things like trying out gradient layers set to Multiply. You can open it again in ArtRage by ‘importing image’. I introduced some reflected lighting into the dark shadows of the group to help explain the volume (**Fig.18**, **Fig.19** and **Fig.20**).

One such trip to Painter had me flatten the image, duplicate it, and set it to Multiply blending mode at reduced transparency. I prefer Multiply to some other additive options simply because all three software open it fairly consistently. I added a gradient (Multiply blending again – I’m an addict) over the top and worked on the mask with painting tools to pick out highlights with dark paint. I’m constantly adjusting and tweaking things all over (**Fig.21** and **Fig.22**).



Fig.23



Fig.25



Fig.21

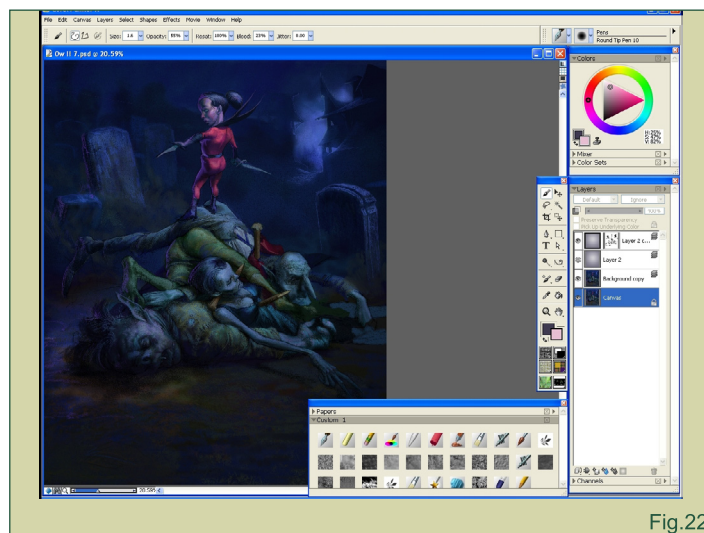


Fig.22



Fig.24

I worked on zinging up the relative tonal values as a whole to draw the focus to her and her hand- and footi-work. To try and create a sort of night-time misty haze, I've added some pale blue airbrushing on a lowish opacity layer, set to Overlay blending mode, and erased some of the darker shadow areas so that it sits better. The foreground wasn't contributing at all to the composition, so I added the head of another victim, where our heroine's attitude suggests she is looking. It makes sense with the working title which was "Did Somebody Just Say Ow...?" It ties the foreground and background together (**Fig.23**, **Fig.24** and **Fig.25**).

Time for the challenge was really tight at this point and I resorted to using a brush I created in Painter to add some foliage quickly. I'd have preferred to craft it by hand. See the Painter manual to understand how easy this can be. If I can do it, anyone can! Same applies to all the ArtRage workings. It is all fully explained in the .pdf manual that ships with the downloadable software.

And that's about where I had to call a halt and declare it finished enough for the challenge!

NICK HARRIS

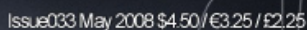
For more from this artist, please contact them at:

virgil.pomfret@online.fr



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MAKING OF'S



TUTORIALS



A collage of various 3D creative projects, including a train, a man in a suit, a woman in a red dress, and a man in a white shirt, all featuring the '3d creative' logo. The projects are displayed in a row, each with its own unique 3D design and the '3d creative' branding.

making of by Jeff Haynie

ASH & SAM

"IT TOOK ME YEARS AS AN
ARTIST TO REALISE THAT
THE BLACK AND WHITE
VALUE STRUCTURE IS THE
HEART AND SOUL OF THE
IMAGE..."



Jeff Haynie takes us through a step-by-step
tutorial on the creation of his image, "Ash &
Sam"...

Haynie ©2006

MAKING OF ASH AND SAM

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION:

"Ash and Sam" was originally painted as a full-page illustration for a game magazine, showing the main characters from "Evil Dead Regeneration", the game. My concept was centred on showing the relationship of Ash, the hero, with his deadite zombie sidekick, victorious over a pile of zombies (or deadites!). My influences came from fantasy art book covers from the 70s by artists like Frank Frazetta, who created dynamic heroic poses and figure compositions using a traditional oil technique. That was the look I was attempting to mimic in this painting.

THUMBNAIL STAGE TO ESTABLISH THE COMPOSITION OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

First I start with black and white thumbnail studies, just exploring the composition of the figures with abstract patterns of light and dark shapes. It took me years as an artist to realise that the black and white value



Fig.02

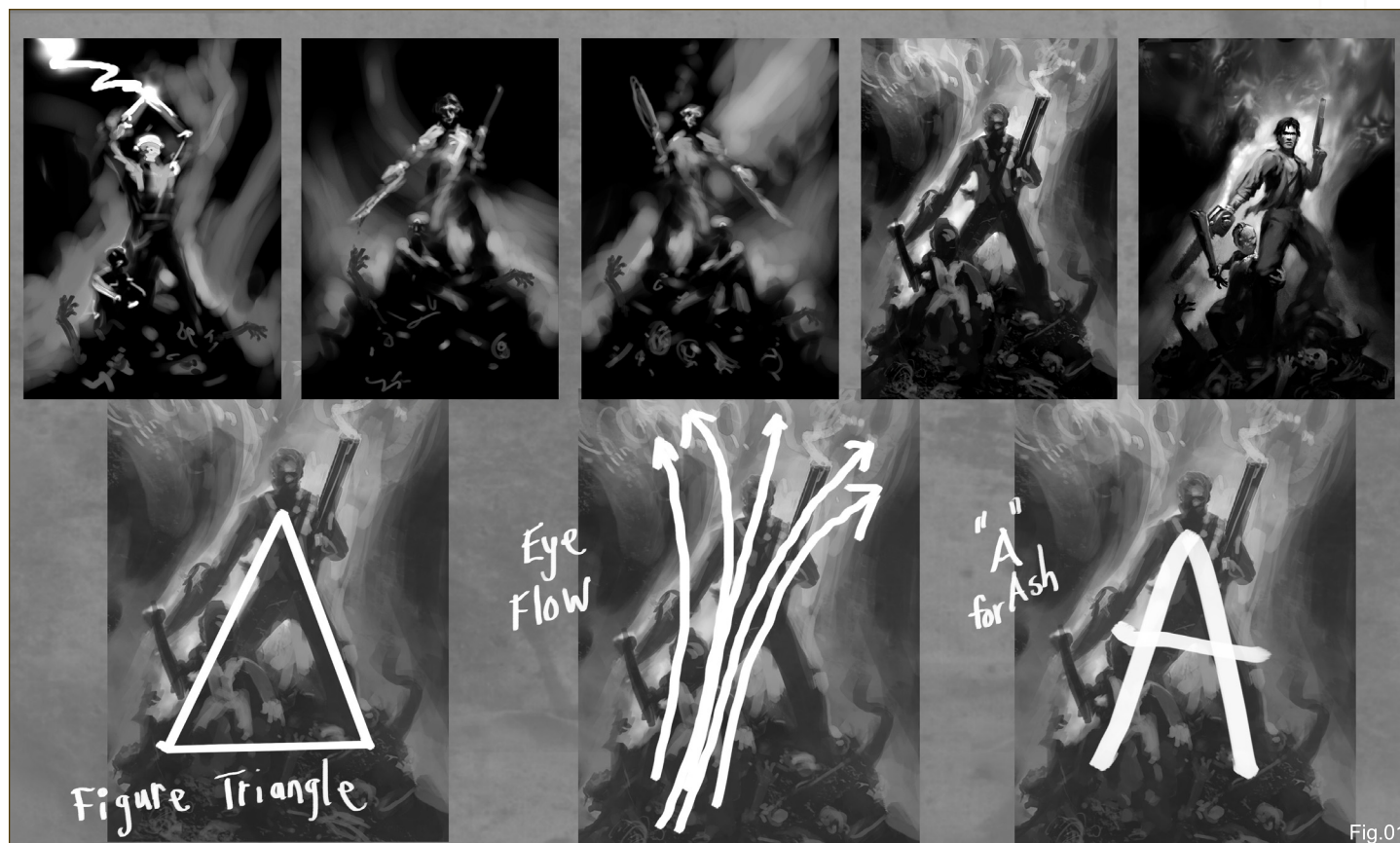


Fig.01

structure is the heart and soul of the image. In my opinion, this is the secret to a dynamic image; not making something realistic, but rather breaking up the image space into an interesting pattern of light and dark shapes.

When I start this process, my mind goes through a visual checklist: Do I want a dark figure on a light background or a light figure on a dark background? Do I want the light to come from the side, above, or below? Do I want my eye to flow left, right, upward or downward through the composition? Learning to make quick visual decisions is important in developing your eye skills.

Notice how the base shapes form an "A", or a figure triangle, which is "A" for Ash. I decided to make the flow of the eye go upwards, symbolizing the team of heroes triumphing over all. The area of Ash's heart will end up being the focal point, which symbolizes his persistence to live and conquer evil. Many important decisions can be made at this stage that will determine the power of the final painting (Fig.01).



Fig.03

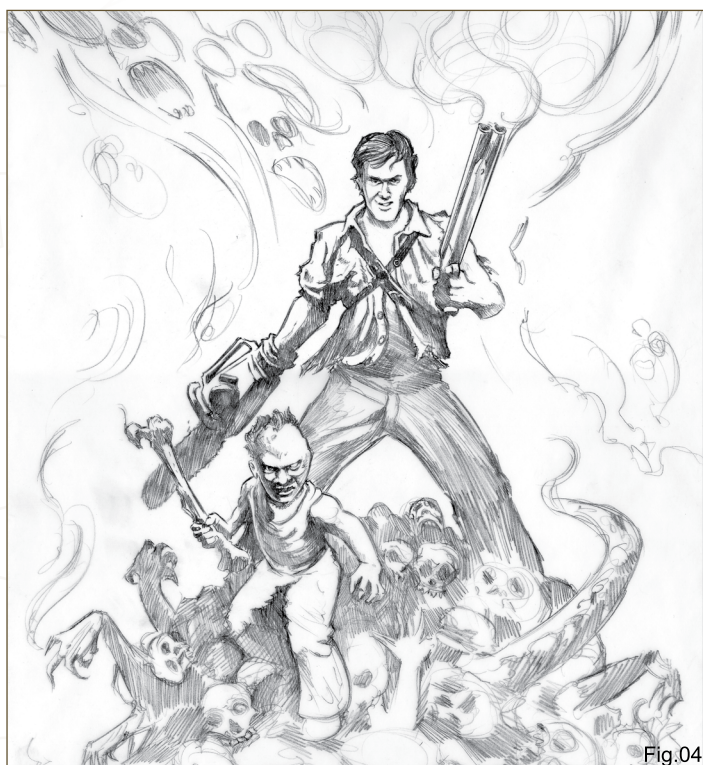


Fig.04

COLOUR THUMBNAIL STAGE TO EXPLORE COLOUR COMBINATIONS

Using one of the black and white thumbnails I experiment with a wide range of colour compositions to see which colour scheme will fit the mood. Since the Evil Dead story is more earthly than high-tech, I choose a warm colour scheme with reds, yellows and greens (Fig.02).

TAKE PHOTOGRAPHIC REFERENCES TO GET DETAILS

Using artist friends to pose for the characters, I do a photo shoot with props to get necessary reference for the body, hands and legs. Even though I love to paint most things out of my head, it is helpful to have great references to fall back on, especially when you have a tight deadline. One good point to remember when shooting references is to have an assistant help work the lights while you work the camera. I have the assistant move the lights around the model so I can see what the light and shadow shapes are doing. I'll photograph a lot of variations of light direction and poses. When I compose the final painting I pull from the best photo information to design my shadows (Fig.03).

TIGHT PENCIL SKETCH STAGE TO DEFINE KEY DETAILS IN COMPOSITION

I compose the final composition by doing a tight pencil sketch using multiple layers of tracing paper. The importance of this stage is to refine the shapes and refine your drawing, especially any important details to the painting (Fig.04).

UNDER PAINTING TO ESTABLISH THE BASE LIGHT AND DARK STRUCTURE

Since I had illustrated the cover of the game box, I had previously painted faces of the characters that I could use to get a start without having to paint them from scratch. I took my favourite value study, enlarged it to working size, and pasted these details in place. Now I block in the base structure of all the main elements in sepia tone to mimic my traditional oil painting technique. Basically, at this stage

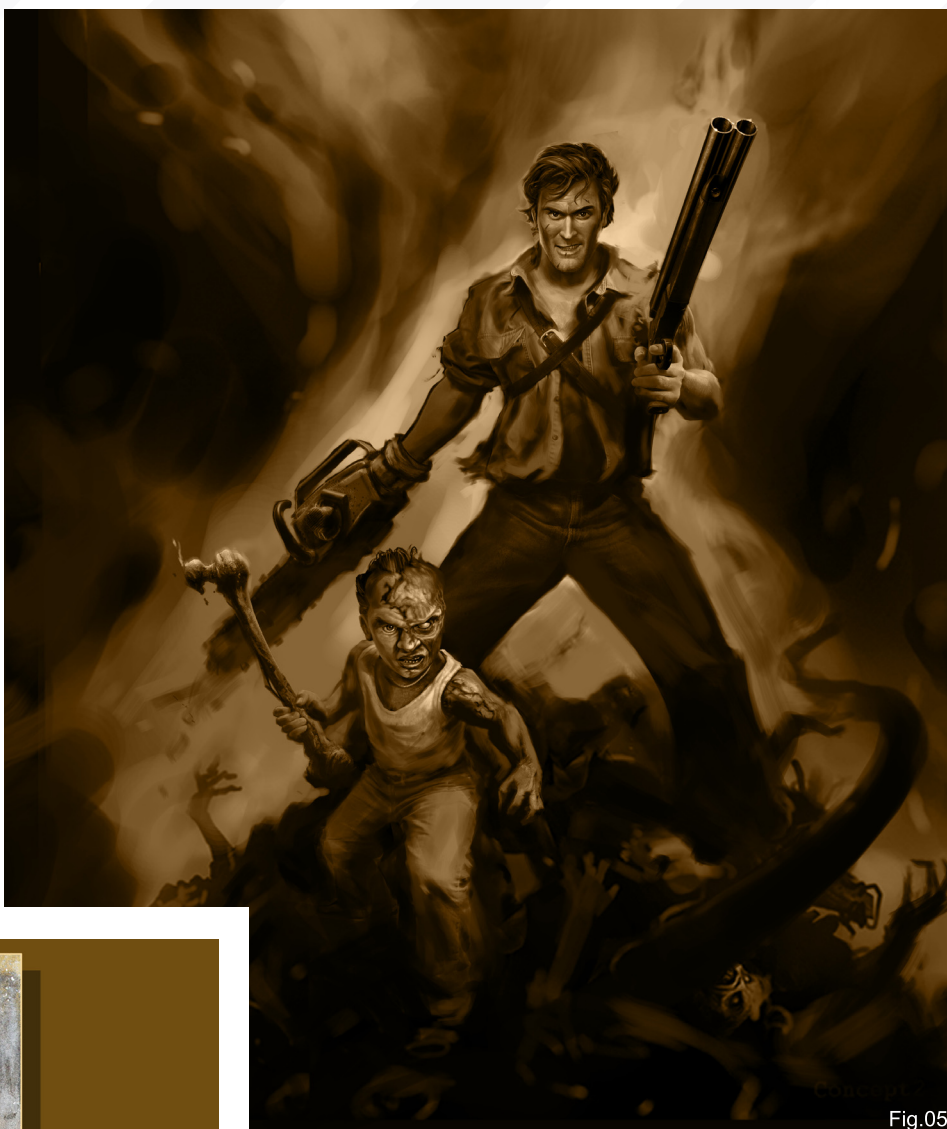


Fig.05

you block in all the light and shadow shapes in sepia tone as a value foundation for the painting. The main Photoshop brush I use is a chalk brush with an 'opacity jitter' brush setting. It gives me the feel of an oil brush (Fig.05).

APPLY TEXTURE TO BREAK UP DIGITAL LOOK

At this stage I apply lots of texture information on top of the image to get lots of cool atmosphere and "texture stuff". It breaks up the smooth, clean digital look and starts to make the piece have more of an oil painting look. One way to do this is to load a texture into your brush using the texture settings. The texture I used was an old stained concrete wall I photographed on vacation. Place the texture on a separate layer above everything else and set the layer setting to 'overlay' or 'hard light', then adjust the opacity to taste. I then apply a layer mask to the layer and paint into the layer mask to break up the opacity more randomly (Fig.06 and Fig.07).



Fig.06

To make textures using a more traditional method I use illustration board, canvas or watercolour paper. Sometimes I gesso it first with a stiff brush to get directional brush strokes in the gesso. After putting a wash of a dark colour on the board, I tilt the board while it is wet to get drips and random texture. If you sprinkle salt onto the board while it is wet you can get some wild texture! That's an old watercolour technique. The outcome is a texture with drips and cool happy accidents. After it's dry, scan it in and use it as a greyscale texture.



Fig.07



Fig.08

BUILD UP THE BASE COLOURS

I call this stage the "ugly" stage. I begin to block in the base colours to layout the main colour composition. In order not to lose my value relationships, I use 'color' or 'overlay' mode in my brushes to lay out colour quickly. Next, I block in the main body colours with a regular brush. I added blue in Ash's shirt, red on the chainsaw, orange in the background, and so on. I don't get caught up in making the colour too accurate since I will be layering lots of colours on top of it. Digital art is so wonderful in that you can undo, try something else or delete the layer if it's not working. I find it important to work the whole painting and not focus too long on one area. My technique is a loose building-up process where I can make changes as I develop the image, refining the shapes and details as I paint (Fig.08).

START BUILDING UP DETAILS

It's time to start bringing out the highlight shapes, adding ghoulish faces, refining character body parts, and so on (Fig.09). With all the strong red



Fig.09

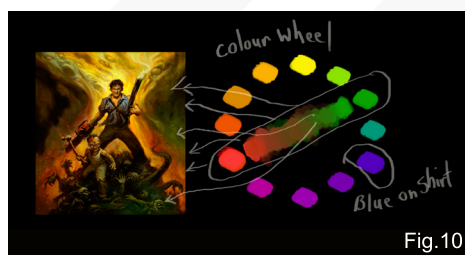


Fig.10

brown under-painting as a base, I start adding the complimentary colour to red, which is green, to bring the light out (Fig.10).

ADD HIGHLIGHTS AND REFINE DETAILS

The painting is now nearing completion. I focus on pushing the contrast of colours and values around the main character's head and chest by adding highlights. Since this area of the painting is the focal point, I put my strongest value and colour contrasts here. I've also added some splatters and grit. At this point my focus is pushing the quality of the details in the areas in which I want your eye to focus. I try to stay out of the shadows and do most of my work in the highlight areas. This allows the shadows to blend more together and breathe (Fig.11).

ADD FINAL DETAILS AND COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS

In the final stage I add the last little highlights and push the saturation of the colour to give more drama to the scene. Even up to the end of the painting I am still refining details, such as the smoke out of the shotgun and the body parts. All in all, this painting took me about 40 to 60 hours to complete (Fig.12 and Fig.13).

JEFF HAYNIE

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<http://www.jeffhaynie.com>

Or contact:

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Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13



next month

artist

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The book is more than just an artwork book, as not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has described in detail the creation process behind each published artwork, in their own words, especially for this book!

This month we feature:

'Sherbetcibot'
by Emrah Elmasli



The following shots of Sherbetcibot book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...



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SHERBETCIBOT

BY EMRAH ELMASLI



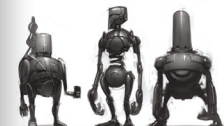
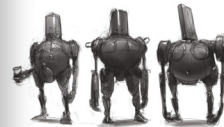
INTRODUCTION

In this making-of I will explain the drawing and painting of a robotic character, and will also touch upon character design in video games. My aim is to provide some information about concept design, and the character that I have designed is a sample of the process that I use. The character is part of the Oriental Science-Fiction Universe, which I've been working on for a long time now – just one of a dozen other robots, Sherbetcibot.

The story is simple: in the days of the Ottoman empire, a time overlap occurred. The worlds of a technologically improved robotic civilization in a parallel world, and the 1700's Ottoman empire, became "superimposed". A disaster occurred in which millions of lives were lost. With time, all wounds healed, and the two civilizations began living together in harmony. But, what kind of civilization is born after these two different worlds merge?

The concept of the story that I've been working on is completely built on this idea. The robot that I have designed is part of the robotic culture that has been affected by the Ottoman culture. It was good to consider a wide scope when I was designing the character, mainly because I needed to think about the character's past and future. I also had to bear in mind the historical facts of the time in which the character has been placed. The concept is complicated, but great fun to work with.

What kind of design elements should I use? Which colors and shapes? These were the key elements to clarify. If they were not good enough to convey the idea to the viewer, then my concept would be unsuccessful.



SCI-FI

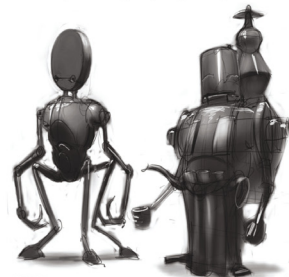
Fig 01

STARTING WORK

Firstly, I had to gather some information for the Ottoman Sherbetcibot character. The clothes worn and the instruments used were very important design elements for me. I collected some photographs and information for the character from various books and the internet. The ornaments and engravings on their outfits were the things that I really wanted to see and use in my design. I also wanted additional Seljuk and Ottoman textures to use, so I searched and found some carpet designs from the Seljuks (one of the Turkish dynasties that ruled Asia Minor from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries). It was important that all of the textures were tileable, so that I could overlay them on my character very easily.

After accumulating enough information about the character and digesting it, I could then begin sketching. I had to have some ideas and rough shapes in mind before starting to sketch. I started out with small thumbnails and firstly determined the silhouette of the character. I used my pencil and paper, and also drew digitally. The most important thing was the idea and getting the brainstorming done before I even started to paint – you need to discharge your mind on to paper. After putting the rough shapes in, I made them look like robots. It was important not to forget to use perspective lines when drawing the characters, to avoid them looking "odd".

After completing the preliminary sketches, I went to work digitally, using both Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter. I love going back and forth between these two softwares. The biggest advantage of creating sketches digitally is the speed, as you can easily do a number of color and shape variations by just duplicating and editing them.



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I continued by refining my rough sketches. The sketches had to resemble the final design as closely as possible (Fig 01), because I wanted to select one of them to develop. As a concept designer, I hoped to see the best design among these sketches, which could then be transformed into an oriental robotic design. As these were only the general shapes of the final characters, they needed much more refining.

I then selected my final sketch. I preferred the first sketch because it had the curved and balanced lines that I was aiming for. I also wanted to use the "Fat" idea, so this one made the most sense.

The next step required cropping the sketch that I had selected and pasting it into a new document. The resolution of the sketches was very low, so I had to increase it to 300 dpi, which resulted in a file more than 2000 pixels in size. I then lowered the opacity of the sketch to 25% (Fig 02). I used the sketch as a reference and drew the character over it once again.

I continued by drawing the lines with a basic thin brush. I didn't need to put in all the details whilst doing the linework because I was able to do this later when applying the form. After finishing the lines I set the layer property to multiply and opened a new layer underneath. I then started forming my character. I prefer to work in black and white whilst first starting to

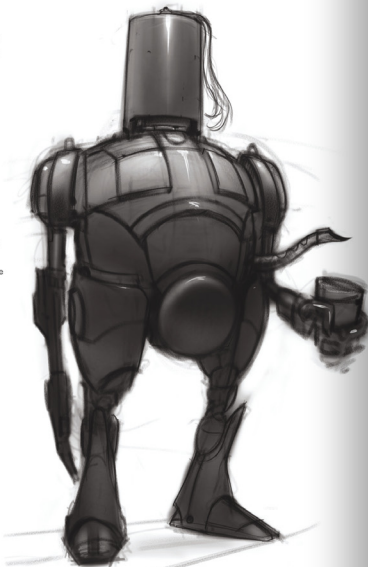


Fig 03

form the shapes, but you can start directly with colors too – it's a matter of preference. I determined the general form: hard and soft edges of the character, and so on (Fig 03). I also started to apply the textures and material information to the painting. This step was very important in the concept design because the material and texture information is very helpful in 3D modeling and texturing processes. 3D Modelers and Texture Artists will use your artwork as a reference for their own work, which is why we must determine all of the details very carefully. After this stage, I could then paint over the lines to give more shape to the character. One thing I had to do was to open a new layer and start painting directly with my own set of brushes, which varied from soft to hard-edged. You can also

use photographs to apply textures to your painting, but you would need to use the Stamp tool for this. Simply open a new layer and change the property of the layer to Overlay, then, using the stamp tool, select the area on the photo that you want to use with 'ALT' and apply it on your painting. That's all you have to do. You can also change the opacity of the Overlay layer to absorb the textures a little. Before starting to color, I added the instruments of the robot, such as the container on his back and the shoulder strap (Fig 04). To start the coloring, I opened a new layer and changed the blending mode to Color. That way I could apply the basic colors on to my character, which in this case is composed mainly of yellows and reds.

DETAILING

The final steps in finishing my character illustration was the detailing and further texturing process. I created new layers and put more detail on to my character, aiming for a more painterly look by absorbing the photographic textures. I tried to capture a more realistic look by detailing the container on his back and I aimed to achieve a chromatic effect.

In the final stages, I applied the textures to the robot and tried to portray a vest effect. I also used the Stamp tool to help, and to complete, the picture by painting a shadow under the robot (Fig 05).

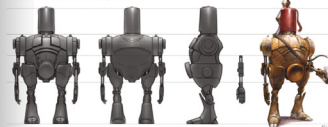


Fig 04

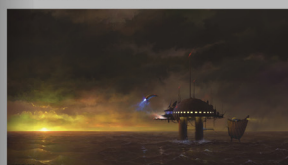
Fig 05

If this character were modeled, I would also have to draw a model sheet, which can also be called an Orthographic drawing (Fig 06), from which modelers can easily understand the shapes and forms.

CONCLUSION

This is the way I generally work when I'm designing a character and it can equally apply to a video game, an animation or a feature film, but the most important thing is the idea. It's your duty to try to make your ideas logical and useful.

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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